

Pinehaven bridge work continues, estimated completion date extended

Special to The Clinton Courier

The City of Clinton recently announced that, following a construction update earlier this month, the anticipated reopening date of the Pinehaven bridge over Bogue Chitto Creek has shifted from late April/early May to the end of May.

The bridge has been closed since the end of April 2025, when the project began to remove the old bridge and build one that is wider and taller, giving more room for floodwaters to pass underneath.

The bridge had previously undergone repairs to replace rotten timber support piles to keep it open. In July of 2023, a Natchez company was paid more than \$83,000 for work that was viewed as a temporary fix to extend the life of the bridge until the City could find the funds to replace it. Despite the repairs, a three-ton weight limit remained in place, with heavy trucks prohibited from using the bridge.

The new bridge will have concrete piles, and the City was allocated \$5 million by the Mississippi Department of Transportation from the Emergency Road and Bridge Fund to pay for the bridge replacement. Consulting City Engineer Bill Owen said that any money left over after the completion of the project will be returned to MDOT.

While the bridge has been closed, detours are diverting traffic using Williamson, Clinton-Tinnin and Kickapoo roads.

City officials say they know "many residents have been anxiously waiting for Pinehaven Bridge to reopen, and we understand the frustration with the extended timeline."

Officials say that the project is now in its final stages, with remaining work including final road striping once the ground layer has fully cured and the installation of guard rails.

City leaders said, "We know this project has been a long process, but we are truly very close to the finish line. We appreciate everyone's continued patience as crews complete the final safety components needed before reopening the bridge to traffic."

Joe McGee Construction Company of Lake was awarded the contract to tear down the old bridge and replace it.



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City officials say the Pinehaven bridge is expected to open near the end of May.

Police chief provides crime statistics update

By Randy Bell

Clinton's police chief uses four categories of felony property crime as a barometer to show how well his department is doing its job. Chief Ford Hayman told the Board of Aldermen May 5 that, last year, the city had a combined total of sixty auto burglaries, residential burglaries, business burglaries and grand larcenies, the fewest since he became chief ten years ago.

"At any time, I can look at those numbers and I can tell you where we are," Hayman said.

The 2025 total represented a sixty-five per cent reduction in burglaries and larcenies compared to 2016, and this year has gotten off to an even better start, with only eight of those crimes reported so far.

"We spend a lot of time dedicating ourselves to lowering those numbers, because, if we take care of these things, the overall health of the city with crime in general is very manageable," the chief said, while pointing out that there's still some work to be done.

"We're still a little high in residential and business

burglaries," he said. "We're working to reduce those. But I'm pretty confident that no one is coming home, finding their door kicked in and everything gone."

Hayman said the only thing better than a low number of crimes would be no crimes at all.

"They're not zeros. That's what I want to see."

And he said citizens can help reduce auto burglaries by making it harder for the thieves to get inside.

"About ninety-nine per cent of our automobile burglaries are unlocked vehicles. Lock 'em up."

He challenges the popular notion that leaving a car unlocked prevents a window from being broken. The chief said most auto burglars who find a locked car will move on.

"That's the trend that we are seeing. [Thieves] are not busting glass."

While Hayman's presentation to the Board focused on property crimes, he notes that there were three armed robberies in Clinton last year, up from two the year before, but down substantially from the eight recorded in 2016. There's been one armed robbery so far this year.

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