

## Park Avenue utility project progressing

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 24 March 2017 10:31

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### Repair is related to 5th and Hill break last year

It's considered a major utility-oriented job, and it's going to be a few months before things get back to normal, a city official said about a repair project on the south side.

The scope of the project is to install a new water transmission main from Historic Highway 66 to the Park Avenue Pump Station, Dennis Romero, director of the city's water and sanitation department, said.

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“This will replace the line we’ve been experiencing problems with,” he said.

Romero, hired into the job a little more than a year ago, has had to hit the ground running with frequent water and sewer line breaks throughout the city since coming aboard. A new transmission line is being put in directly in front of the area of the former Gallup Catholic High School. The area is also home to Father Dunstan Park.

“We had a 10-inch line break in mid-March,” Romero said. “The line break was caused by an inaccurate line located on the 16-inch water line replacement project. The 10-inch line was installed in 1957 and did not take a long time to complete.”

But a separate 16-inch project is a different story, Romero explained. That job requires a 16-inch line to be re-built from Highway 66 to the intersection of Fifth Street and Park Avenue. The cost to do that job is \$647,000, and work crews are moving rapidly to get the job done.

“The project began on Feb. 6 and will end no later than July 6, as per the contract,” Romero said. “The contractor, Adame Construction (Los Lunas) is moving forward very quickly and we anticipate a fast completion date.”

As far as the 10-inch line goes, water was shut off for an instance and low water pressure was periodically experienced, Romero said.

The 16-inch line repair work is connected to a September 2016 line break on Fifth Street and Hill Avenue whereby a family was left homeless as the result of the incident. A geyser broke through the ground and shot water more than 20 feet into the air and damaged the residence of Melissa Ramirez.

The water came from the broken 16-inch main. The main carries Gallup’s water supply from tanks that hold some 5 million gallons, Romero has said. The city estimates the geyser kicked out more than 1 million gallons of water, in the process flooding Ramirez’ home of 14 years.

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“I think everybody feels that it’s something that should never have happened,” John Sanchez, who lives around the corner from Ramirez, said. “The city’s water and sewer lines need to be replaced and needed to be replaced a long time ago.”

Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney has said in city council meetings that the city will not abandon the repair work along 5th Street. He has vowed to assist the Ramirez family in whatever way possible.

***By Bernie Dotson  
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