McKinley County approves Johnson Road improvements

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 19 May 2017 00:13





The McKinley County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a plan for improvements to Johnson Road. The act took place at the May 9 regular meeting and was met with enthusiasm from people who utilize the road.

Commissioner Bill Lee attended the meeting via telephone due to the fact that he was out of town. His comments were in favor of improvements. There was no immediate timeline or cost placed on the improvements.

“It has been about 50 years that this road has needed improvements,” Eloise Johnson told board members. “It’s named after my dad, Jack Johnson. It is such a relief to see that this is actually becoming a reality and I want to thank you for doing this. I’m glad that things are really coming about.”

Johnson noted that the road serves as a way for school buses to go back and forth from Twin Lakes to Tohatchi. “The community and the schools of Twin Lakes and Tohatchi have a lot of students that ride buses along this route,” Johnson said. “It makes me very happy that improvement is within sight. Thank you to each of you.”

McKinley County Roads Superintendent Jeff Irving said Johnson Road has faced various challenges over the years. He said the road contains spotty holes and is a danger for vehicles. Irving prefaced remarks to the panel by saying that whatever direction the situation goes in, it has been noted in county records that there may be archaeological sites that might prop up along the way of improvements.

“It’s something to be mindful of,” Irving said. “This has been talked about in the past.”

Lee said after the meeting that the county would respect the sacred site aspect and hold additional meetings, if necessary, to still carry out the improvements. He stressed the importance of everybody being on the same page.

“If more meetings are required we will hold those meetings,”Lee said. “I think we all understand that there might be archaeological sites here and there once the project gets underway.”

Commissioner Carol Bowman-Muskett was pleased with the commission vote on Johnson Road.

“This project started a long time ago,” Bowman-Muskett said. “It was on the books for a long time and no one ever did anything with it. When I came on as a commissioner, this was one of the projects that I started on.”

Bowman-Muskett added that improvements to Johnson Road have been “seven years in the making.” Bowman-Muskett concluded, “Let’s move on and get it done.”

Johnson Road is north of Yatahey and reachable from U.S. 491.

By Bernie Dotson

Sun Correspondent