

City of Grants inaugurates new road equipment

Written by By Helen Davis Sun Correspondent
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Teaching/testing in the parking lot

GRANTS— As a test run of new equipment and the start of necessary street work, the City of Grants plowed up the parking lot at the dog park and Streets Department building Monday, introducing the Asphalt Zipper to the city's stable of roadwork equipment.

The Zipper, priced at \$138,000, is a relatively low-cost solution to road surface problems. Dedicated loaders for resurfacing can cost \$500,000 or more. "We have it under a lease to own with five payments of \$27,600," City Manager Laura Jaramillo said.

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“The toothy machine can be mounted in the shovel of a loader and in ideal conditions prepare as much as two miles of road,” Chris Roybal, Administrator for the Street Department and maintenance fleet said.

The entire resurfacing project involves laying crusher fines over the surface before the Zipper grinds it into small chunks. After grinding, road workers apply oil binder and chip seal before the surface is bladed and rolled. Roybal said ‘It will be rolled and rolled again.’

At this point, the department is not certain how many times the surface will need to be rolled before it is stable. “That is why we are starting today; we don’t really know how long it will take. We want the citizens to know this is a learning experience,” Roybal added that road resurfacing will tie up the roads briefly and occasionally block residential driveways, so the department wants to make sure they can schedule work on a section to be done in a day and free up access for people as they come home.

The road work is beginning in areas that will cause the least residential disruption until the practical aspects of the projects can be determined. Before committing to projects throughout town, the city will give the Zipper another test-drive in front of City Hall and on 911 Ave.

“Citizens need to know,” Roybal said.

“The Zipper has adjustable blades that can be set at depths from one inch to 12 inches,” Roybal said. “It includes a water tank mounted on the back to help keep dust down and cool the massive bits as they eat up the roadway.”

Earlier this year, Asphalt Zipper, based in Pleasant Grove, Utah, demonstrated the machine on the torn-up surface of Sakelares Blvd. ‘It worked alright,’ Grants Street Superintendent Manuel Blea said. “I hope it does what it says it will,” he added, and said the Village of Milan has one.

Milan Village Manager Marcella Sandoval said the village Zipper is smaller than the one Grants is purchasing. “I like it. It is good for little jobs. Here, we do a block at a time,” she said. She said that when Grants approached them about borrowing the village Zipper she was happy to

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provide it but told them it was too small for the city's projects.

Asphalt Zipper representative and trainer Bryan Knight said the company has sold thousands of Zippers over the last 20 years. "They use them at the Denver and Phoenix airports for small jobs," he said. "State departments of transportation and towns use them on their projects," he added.

The condition of roads in Grants has been a concern for citizens and city government for many years. Roybal said the water in the area is high, and the alkaline nature of the water, affects road stability. "The city is excited at the possibility of effectively addressing the ongoing problems with the new equipment," she said. "We look forward to moving ahead with the streets. We will address them as fast as we can. "I think the residents will be excited once they see the results and the return on investment," she said.

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