

Lupton N9402 Bridge replacement set to start this month

Written by Staff Reports

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TSE BONITO, N.M. — The Navajo Division of Transportation is set to begin the N9402 Bridge Replacement Project in Lupton Chapter in mid-November.

The bridge being replaced lies approximately three-quarters of a mile southwest of the Interstate 40 intersection with Navajo Route 12 in Lupton. The current one-lane, steel military-style bridge crosses over the Rio Puerco Wash and has been deemed functionally obsolete.

The bridge will be replaced with a new five-span bridge that will accommodate the current average daily traffic count of 400 vehicles per day.

The project will cost \$5,531,604 and is funded by the Federal Highway Administration.

During project construction, all access to the bridge will be fully closed and traffic along N9402 will be detoured to Exit 351/Allentown on I-40.

Navajo DOT selected FNF Construction as the contractor. Wilson & Company is designated to

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provide construction managers and engineering support. Western Technology, Inc. will conduct quality control testing on behalf of FNF.

The bridge design was completed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Region Department of Transportation, which also completed environmental clearances and acquired right-of-way for the project.

BIA NRDOT Engineer of Record Harold Riley said that the bridge replacement project has been in the making since 2002.

“In 2002, we started the design process to replace the old military style bridge with a pre-stress girder style bridge that can carry the required AASHTO loadings,” Riley said. “The community will finally get a safe bridge they can use to get across the Rio Puerco Wash without fear the bridge will fail.”

NDOT executive director Garret Silversmith recognized the efforts of Lupton Chapter in advocating on behalf of their community to push this project forward to fruition.

“We appreciate all parties that are involved in this project and know Lupton Chapter has a long history of working to get this particular bridge replaced,” Silversmith said. “The BIA NRDOT has been critical to the process by providing engineering and clearance documents. Our chosen contractor, FNF, will help improve access and safety in the Lupton Chapter.”

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez congratulated the Chapter for a job well done in advocating on behalf of their constituency.

“Improvements like these start at the chapter level where advocacy and strong leadership make projects happen,” Nez said. “In many cases, it does take time to put all the pieces into place, but in the end, it’s of great benefit to the community.”

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Bridge demolition will take place in mid-November. Navajo DOT asks all residents and community members to abide by the aforementioned detour that utilizes Exit 351 on Interstate 40 to access areas east and west of the bridge.