



Work on Summit Street begins after 2015-16 rains cause massive erosion problems

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - After unprecedented rainfall from December 2015 to January 2016, erosion in the Christian Hill area of Alton became even more of an urgent problem.

Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart said work on Summit Street began the morning of Tuesday, April 25, 2017. Barnhart said the reasons behind the delay were many, but added the city wanted to make a plan to not only repair the damage caused by the erosion, but would also work toward preventing future erosion, protecting the sewer, repairing the street and finding a way to cope with future street inundations. Barnhart also said the City of Alton was hoping for money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which never came.

Work is being done by East Alton based RCS Construction, which has previously worked with the city for the upcoming multi-modal transportation facility off Homer Adams Parkway, among other projects.

"They are a good, local union contractor, and we're happy they got the work for this project," Barnhart said.

The cost of the project is an estimated \$375,000, and Barnhart said work should be completed within 90 days, assuming the weather is not especially bad during that time, and no unexpected hazards occur.

During that time, sand will be removed from the street, and a sheet pile will be installed on the Summit Street side of the road, which will work in a dual fashion to both prevent erosion and protect the sewer main. Barnhart said he hoped such measures will prevent catastrophic erosion, like that which was seen across Alton following the winter rains of 2015-16.

"We had an absurd amount of rainfall," Barnhart said of that time. "It caused erosion throughout the city. Our storm water systems were inundated, and any type of water was not allowed to enter it. The water had to go somewhere, so it caused a street collapse and erosion."

That erosion also damaged the protective covering of dirt around the area's sewer lines. Part of the work being done is designed to protect that sewer line from future erosion.

On the river side of the street, Barnhart said the contractor will use either rip-raff or some other form of technology to prevent future erosion. He also said the storm water issue will also be solved upon the completion of the project.

