

State lawmaker and city officials visit businesses on Cherry Ave.

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ening the street and removing the old

Construction on the viaduct on K-27 includes the installation of new concrete approach slabs to the bridge, will provide a better base for the road and a smoother transition from the road to the bridge. Pickman said they are two separate projects — K-27 is a state project and Cherry is a city project — but the state has the authority to make decisions for both projects because it's paying for both.

Pickman said the city and state agreed that Cherry and the viaduct would not be closed at the same time, but it happened anyway.

"There was a miscommunication at the Kansas Department of Transportation," he said, "but Chriss McDiffett, district engineer from Norton, has assured me he is aware of what happened, has spoken to those responsible and has taken steps to prevent this from happening again in the future."

McDiffett admitted better communication could have eased the strain on businesses.

"Running the Cherry Street project is up to the city of Goodland," he said. "We only oversee it because federal funds are involved. We are trying to work with them on that as a joint effort, but our communication with them could have been better."

Morrison and Pickman emphasized the need for businesses and drivers to focus on the positive. They pointed out the end result of these projects will benefit the city and the business owners on Cherry.

"Goodland needs to have beautiful entrances to the city," Morrison said. "These projects will accomplish that and will benefit everyone in the long run."

The city manager said he wants people to be aware that the projects will not be finished before the alumni reunion, which takes place Friday-Sunday, Aug. 3-5. August 13 is the earliest possible date for completion of the viaduct, he said, and the Cherry project is not likely to be finished before August 22. But, he said, the city is trying to work around the projects to make the best of the situation.

"The city is working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors' Bureau," he said, "to put maps and brochures in the motel rooms to help those attending the reunion find their way around and be aware of activities that are taking place."

Morrison said the city plans to put up more signs to make the alternate routes to businesses on Cherry more clear. He said he's received numerous e-mail messages saying there aren't enough detour signs, and the ones they have aren't clear.

Rich Miller, co-owner of Grass Roots, said the representatives didn't talk to him, but he heard Representative Morrison's comments on the radio.

"It wasn't helpful to hear it was a communication error," he said, "and that there is nothing we can do."

He said he feels everyone in charge of the projects should have tried harder to do things right in the beginning to



A construction worker smoothed the fly ash that was laid for the base of Cherry Ave. Wednesday morning. Ritchie Paving, a construction company from Wichita, will pave the new road soon.

Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News

avoid the problems.

"It is imperative we do things right in the first place," he said. "The rest of us have to pay the price when we do something wrong."

He said sales are down 70-75 percent as a result of the street closings.

"This is a high price to pay for progress," he said. "But maybe it will

be worth it."

Dean Terry, manager of Dollar General, said he felt the meeting was productive and he was impressed Morrison responded so quickly to his concerns. But, he added, he's still not happy with the closing of Cherry.

Terry said he personally e-mailed Morrison about the losses Goodland businesses have suffered as a result of the closing of Cherry.

"I was surprised Morrison was over here this quick," Terry said. "He really cares about northwest Kansas."

Terry said the state representative promised him more signs to tell people how to get to Dollar General and Pizza Hut, which drivers can only get to by driving across Dollar's parking lot. The store manager is upset that present signs are not specific enough and hopes the new signs will fix the problem.

Terry said one sign is posted by McB's Motor and Radiator Repair and simply tells travelers to go to 19th Street and Eustis. This is a problem, the

manager said, because most people do not know where Eustis is.

"I live in Goodland and I didn't know where it was," he said, "until I was blocked in at the store and had to find my way out."

As for the loss of sales, Terry said, it still angers him.

"We are not talking about 10s or 20s of dollars," he said, "but thousands of dollars lost, and I still have to pay my utilities. If it was a few hundred lost here and there, I could live with it."

Sherrie Rutherford, assistant manager at Pizza Hut, said Morrison and the city officials who visited her were very interested in the situation, but not very helpful. The road is still closed, she said, and the only thing that will really help is to finish the work faster.

"It would help," Rutherford said, "if the crew worked six or seven days a week instead of five until the road is opened to the businesses."

McDiffett said the Department of Transportation is trying to keep the

inconvenience on the K-27 construction to a minimum. The state is offering an incentive bonus to Ritchie Paving, the contractor on the project, if it completes the work ahead of schedule, he said.

Donna Binning, construction engineer from Atwood, said the bonus is \$5,000 per day for every day the project is completed before Nov. 1, with a maximum bonus of \$150,000. She said the department will charge Ritchie Paving \$5,000 for every day the work goes past the Nov. 1 deadline.

Of the two projects being done at the same time, McDiffett said it was just unfortunate circumstances and that whenever the state schedules construction projects, things always come up to change the schedule.

"The timing is never good," McDiffett said, "no matter when you plan something. This will affect the fair and the class reunion, but sometimes you have to accept some inconveniences to make progress."

Police want second polygraph

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detectives interviewed Colvert for more than an hour late last week about the questions he chose and his assessment of Condit's credibility.

Since that interview, local police have pressed for another interview and polygraph, while FBI agents have enlisted Condit's help in creating a profile of Levy that could help identify others who might have harmed her or

places she might have gone when she disappeared.

Abbe Lowell, Condit's attorney, said earlier this month that Condit took the polygraph and answered "no" to three questions:

—Did the congressman have anything at all to do with Levy's disappearance?

—Did he harm her or cause anyone else to harm her in any way?

—Does he know where she can be

located?

The question about visits to his apartment was the only other question on the test about Levy, the sources said. The other six questions, the sources said, involved more generic issues designed to provide the polygrapher with a baseline to determine Condit's credibility.

The polygrapher didn't ask any questions about California flight attendant Anne Marie Smith, who alleges she had an affair with Condit.

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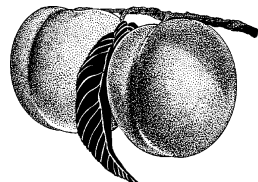
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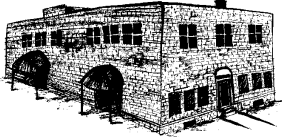
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