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Mankato Free Press

Road work may hamper fair traffic

Blue Earth County sees 'minimal' effect

By Mathias Baden Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — Construction beginning next week along County Road 38 will complicate drivers' access to the Blue Earth County Fair.

"People coming to the fair are going to be able to get there," said Jan Roelofs, president of the Fair Board. "It's just going to be a headache."

Traffic from Mankato will need to take the second exit from Hwy. 169 into Garden City. The first exit will be shut down Monday and remain closed during reconstruction of the north-south section of the county road, which is also known as old Highway 169.

The next exit to the south is the east-west portion of County Road 38, turning into Washington and Fairground streets on the way to the fair.

Al Forsberg, county engineer and Public Works director, said Washington Street will stay open for the duration of the annual festival, which runs from July 29 to August 1.

"During construction, there will be good access to the fair," Forsberg said. "It should be really minimal effect."

The county's contract with Southern Minnesota Construction stipulates that construction not interfere with the event, but drivers leaving the fairgrounds might have to drive a different route than usual.

"It's going to be a little bit of a problem," Roelofs said. "But it's just like any other summer in Minnesota - you deal with some road construction."

Starting next week, pavement is scheduled to be removed from the north-south section of the L-shaped county road. Grading, installation of storm sewer, curb and gutter and the new pavement will follow.

After the north-south section is complete and open to traffic, the east-west stretch of roadway, a portion of Washington Street, will be reconstructed.

The project is supposed to run for about a month.