

Incentives: M-5 roadwork is 'right on schedule'

BY RICHARD PEARL
STAFF WRITER

"A bunch of bees" hard at work is how Farmington Hills Public Services Director Tom Biasell describes the swarms of workers at various points along the M-5/Grand River freeway.

"(To) anybody that's been out there, the thing looks like a bunch of bees in a hive - and they're hitting it very hard," he said, of the progress being made on the multiple projects along the five-mile stretch of highway. Biasell gave the city council a

report on the progress at its meeting Monday night and updated the Observer Tuesday morning following a meeting with representatives of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Overall, he said, the work is "right on schedule. There's a hefty incentive clause" built into the contracts, he noted. The only exceptions are the three bridges in the project, which are a week behind schedule because contractors found extra work was needed once they got going - particularly on the

Orchard Lake Bridge over M-5 and the M-5 overpass above Farmington Road.

However, they and the bridge at the east end of M-5, where the freeway begins and ends, are scheduled to be re-opened by the third week in October, he said.

"The reason all this is coming together so quickly," according to Biasell, is:

- 1) "They are trying to get it all reopened before winter and get back to some sort of normalcy," and
- 2) I-275 is scheduled to be resurfaced next year from about

■ '(To) anybody that's been out there, the thing looks like a bunch of bees in a hive - and they're hitting it very hard.'

Tom Biasell
—Public services director

Six Mile north to I-696 and "they wanted (Grand River/M-5) in good shape to handle the detour traffic."

When that begins, Biasell said, MDOT will recommend that motorists heading out I-96 from Detroit exit the interstate at Telegraph, go north to Grand River and then west to pick up the continuation of I-96 beyond I-275.

What's interesting about the current flurry, Biasell noted, is that the four general contractors on the various projects - the road resurfacing, the bridge work and the M-5/Grand River inter-

change - are independent of each other but also "are reliant on each other" to get the projects done.

As for the details of current work on M-5:

■ The westbound outside lane on the Grand River overpass above M-5 was closed Monday so crews could build a pedestrian walkway alongside it.

The lane will remain closed through November. Until then, both eastbound lanes will be open but only one westbound lane.

■ The northwest exit ramp from M-5 onto Freedom Road to

Grand River will remain closed until mid-November.

Biasell reminded drivers that, when the exit ramp and Freedom Road reopen, all traffic will be one way, heading northwest to Grand River. (The one-way segment begins at the Chatham Hills subdivision, running northwest.) Drivers will no longer be able to exit Grand River onto Freedom Road.

And, until that exit ramp from M-5 re-opens, those wishing to get to the Grand River-Halsted-10 Mile area from Eight Mile will be directed to take Grand River through downtown Farmington.

■ The ramp from I-275 onto southbound Grand River/M-5 will remain closed, with traffic being detoured to 12 Mile and Haggerty, then down Haggerty to the Grand River-10 Mile area.

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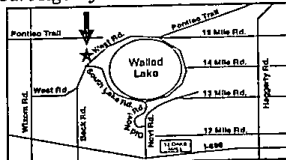
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