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Rain Slows Work on Auburn Highway Project

(KTNC) -- Progress continues on the Highway 136 project through downtown Auburn, Nebraska though recent rains have slowed work on paving the sidewalks.

Project Manager Mike Habegger, with the Department of Roads, gave an update on the project at Auburn City Hall Tuesday afternoon. Workers laid some concrete on Tuesday while they were dodging raindrops. He said they completed a section of sidewalk from Highway 75 to Old Whiskey Run and another section on the north side of Highway 75.

Weather permitting, Habegger says they would prep the sidewalks Tuesday afternoon and continue pouring concrete early Wednesday morning. The contractor hopes to finish the sidewalks by Saturday so the barricades can be removed and open Highway 136 to local traffic in downtown Auburn early next week.

Phase two will begin after the sidewalk is complete. Habegger says the contractor wants to do stages one and two of that phase at the same time. That would mean doing two lanes at once, rather than one as planned. Habegger said that would require permission of property owners in that area.

The contractor estimates that could cut one to two weeks off the time it takes to do the next phase of the project.

As construction continues, Habegger says they're still having problems with semi-truck traffic through Auburn. He says they'll take steps to try and dissuade trucks from using Highway 136 in Auburn when they reopen the road to local traffic. That includes setting up barricades and cones to separate east and westbound traffic, though he says it will be difficult to prevent all trucks from using the highway.

Trucks are prohibited from using Highway 136 through Auburn until the entire project is complete this fall.

Another problem, Habegger says, is people not minding the sidewalk barricades. He says they've had several incidents of people skirting the barricades and walking through the freshly poured concrete, forcing workers to tear up the concrete and redo the work.

Habegger said work on Highway 136 between Brownville and Auburn would likely begin sometime next week. Crews that were to have started that part of the project are finishing work on Highway 2 around Nebraska City and have been hampered by recent rainfall there.

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