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So far, so good in Horicon

Phase I of the massive Highway 33/Larabee Street improvements project has been completed ahead of schedule and under budget, according to Craig Kunkel, president of Kunkel Engineering Group.

The firm engineered the sewer and water utility portions of the initiative and worked with city officials to secure grant funding for downtown enhancements, he said. A weekend community celebration commemorated the project's conclusion.

Phase I encompassed sewer and water utility improvements through downtown Horicon from North Palmary Street to Vine Street, as well as the installation of the ornamental enhancements, Kunkel said. "Work on this important thoroughfare is now completed and open to traffic," he said. "Anytime improvements of this significance are made in a community's downtown we work hard to minimize the disruption to the business district, but the project end is always a welcome relief. Our goal was to complete this phase in advance of increased fall tourist traffic and community events."

Construction on the \$2.46 million Phase I project was originally slated to begin in spring 2008, but was delayed by the state Department of Transportation to March 2009, with completion expected by early fall.

"Phase I actually was completed ahead of schedule for \$1.96 million, some \$500,000 under budget," Kunkel said.

Additionally, Kunkel said, the firm helped to secure \$366,900 in Transportation Enhancement Grants to cover the costs of the ornamental street lighting, decorative sidewalks, crosswalks and terraces, and the plazas and monuments that run from the intersection of Lake and Vine streets west to the John Deere yard entrance. Kunkel Engineering also planned placement of and inspected these enhancements.

Phase II, now under construction, includes sewer and water utility improvements from Vine Street west to Larabee Street between Lake and Barstow streets. Kunkel Engineering Group designed and engineered the sewer and water utility portion as well as street reconstruction for this phase. In the planning for this phase, Kunkel said, it was determined that utility and street reconstruction could provide opportunities for environmental preservation and engineering efficiencies.

"We identified a way for the Larabee Street sewer to be reversed and flow south, then connect to the new sanitary sewer being built as part of the Highway 33

project,” Kunkel said. “It means that the sewer lines beneath Bowling Green Park can be abandoned, and it just bodes well for the long-term health of the Rock River overall.” The DOT was also able to bid this project as part of the Highway 33 initiative, thus reducing the direct burden of cost to city residents. Phase II will be substantially complete and open for traffic by this fall with final completion by summer 2010 at an estimated cost of \$4.2 million.