



Action near on two bridges

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A bridge spanning Canadian Pacific Railway tracks in the town of Oneonta that was closed by the state in January 2008 could be open by this fall, according to Town Supervisor Robert Wood.

The town is awaiting final design work and expects to award a bid on a replacement next month, Wood said.

In East Worcester, a bridge on Brooker Hollow Road spanning Canadian Pacific tracks is tied in with the Oneonta bridge, and work on it could also begin soon, said Ronald Tiderencel, supervisor of the Otsego County Highways, Forestry and Parks Department.

"I'm really pushing for it (to be complete) this year," Tiderencel said.

The projects each have an estimated cost of about \$600,000.

"We are hoping (the bids) would come in at or under that," Wood said.

There is a lot of competition for construction projects, he said, which could work to the benefit of the town.

The town expects to open bids Aug. 10 and award a contract at the Aug. 12 meeting of the town board.

Both bridges have been deemed deficient by the state Department of Transportation, and a settlement with Canadian Pacific Railway brokered by state Sen. James Seward, R-Milford, split the cost between the state and the railway. State funding was set aside three years ago.

The Oneonta bridge shows obvious signs of stress, including rebar poking through crumbling concrete abutments. It was closed in late January 2008, and barriers are in place at each end.

The East Worcester bridge is in a similar situation, although it remains open.

A temporary fix by the town has allowed vehicle traffic to use that bridge since January 2006. The bridge had been deemed unsafe by the DOT in 2005.

Residents of both towns have complained about the slow progress in getting the bridges replaced.

Design changes have led to the delay, Wood said.

The Pony Farm bridge links state Route 7 in the town of Oneonta to Pony Farm Road. It is one of only two road routes into the 70-acre Pony Farm Industrial Park and a neighborhood of several homes and a farm.

Wood and Tiderencel said they expect the railway to release its share of the funding soon.

Tiderencel said the bidding process for the East Worcester bridge would begin once a design is finalized.

"I'd like to see construction begin at the latest in September," he said.

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