

City Business by Michael Leamons

At Monday's meeting, the Council awarded this year's street repair project to Express Paving of Granbury, the firm which did last year's street repairs. In addition to advertising for bids in the Hico News Review and on the City's website, four paving contractors were contacted and asked to bid this year's project: Chase Harris of Stephenville, Cummings Paving of Blanco, Northeastern Paving of Granbury (another firm which has done work for Hico in the past) and Express Paving. Chase and Northeastern failed to submit bids. Base bids for the stabilization and seal coat work of \$110,997 and \$86,331 were received from Cummings and Express, respectively. Once the cost of concrete swales (or inverts) at driveways and 3 locations where the drainage channel crosses the streets and a couple of other adjustments were made, the totals for the two proposals ended up being \$123,467 for Cummings and \$102,666 for Express.

Work on the project is expected to begin in late June or early July. The project will encompass N. Pecan from Lamar to just past Jory; North from Kirk to Mesquite and Chestnut from 9th Street to the end of the street, just past Keller. In the past, only a center strip was resurfaced down North and Chestnut. The current project will encompass the full width of all the selected streets.

The work will consist of soil stabilization, addition of base as necessary to crown the roadway, 2 coats of chip seal, construction of concrete swales and cleaning out ditches adjacent to the project to provide for better drainage.

The soil stabilization consists of grinding up the existing asphalt and mixing 4% to 5% Portland cement with the top 6" to 8" of material in the roadway (including the pulverized asphalt). Then, water is added and the surface is compacted. The City of Stephenville has been using this method of base preparation since 1992 and has been very pleased with the results. It costs more upfront, but prevents base failures and results in a finished product with a much longer lifespan.

As has been mentioned in this column previously, several criteria are involved in selecting the streets to be resurfaced. Lists created several years ago by a commission which identified the streets in the worst condition and the streets with the highest volumes of traffic are consulted. Additionally, drawings indicating streets which are likely to be torn up when water and wastewater lines are replaced are also consulted. (We can't afford to resurface something only to tear it up a short time later.)

When so many streets need help, it's hard trying to focus only on a few, but the resources to do the repairs are limited. The General Fund, out of which street repairs are paid, has an annual budget of a little less than \$900,000. Law Enforcement, Municipal Court, Fire and Safety, Code Compliance, Administration, Elections, Tax Collection, City Park and Street operations all have to be funded out of that budget. The Council has committed to spending roughly \$100,000, or 11% of that budget to street repair projects each year. If all of Hico's streets were to be repaired at one time, multi-millions of dollars would be required. Several years ago you, the citizenry, indicated you didn't want to go into more debt to get all of that street work done. Thanks for your continued patience as we pursue a slow, but steady, plan of addressing needed street repairs.

May God bless the City of Hico.