

Eddy County Road Department Sets Target to Complete Road Projects

Eddy County Public Works Director Jason Burns has a major goal to complete nearly two dozen road construction projects in Eddy County when the current fiscal year ends in late June of next year. Burns said county road crews have been keeping up a rapid pace for the past few months on road projects in the northern and southern portions of Eddy County.

Tuesday, the Eddy County Board of County Commissioners approved a schedule of road projects taking place throughout the county during the current government fiscal year which started on July 1 of this year. According to a document, submitted by Burns to commissioners, the Public Works Department has completed three of 20 road projects across the county as the department is working with over \$26 million in funds to complete the projects.

He said funds to work on the projects are coming from multiple sources.

“The majority of the county’s funding comes from county gross receipts taxes (GRT’s), which is why we highlight oil and gas, because anything that comes out of Eddy County we collect a portion of,” Burns said.

Burns said Eddy County also has a road tax and there’s a partnership with the New Mexico Department of Transportation (DOT) of \$5 million as major work is coming to United States Highway 285, New Mexico State Road 128 and New Mexico State Road 31.

“That’s the whole purpose of this funding was for our presented alternate routes to help alleviate the traffic from the 285 and 128 (projects), is to help people get around while all this construction is going on. Part of that deal is we agreed we’d match that funding with whatever they had, so they agreed to give \$5 million and the county is going to give \$5 million,” he said.

Burns said Eddy County had a \$12.4 million surplus from last fiscal year and commissioners earmarked most of the extra money for the Public Works Department.

“The way our budget works is we have an anticipated revenue that we get from GRT’s. We set our county budget based off that anticipation,” he said.

Burns said when the county goes above the anticipated numbers, that’s when the county comes up with a surplus.

“That’s where that \$12.4 million was generated, the surplus from last year and at the commissioner’s direction this is going to be a priority,” he said.