

Earthquake-damaged Imperial County roads to be restored

Elizabeth Varin, Imperial Valley Press, 8-4-10

Some roads damaged by the April 4 earthquake may be completed as early as November after plans were approved to go out to bid on two of them.

The Imperial County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved going out to bid on Drew Road, both north and south of Interstate 8, and Brockman Road at the New River.

The Drew Road project could cost \$705,268 for construction at both Sunbeam Lake and the New River, Public Works Director Bill Brunet said. The hope is that all construction costs will be covered by the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief program.

Reimbursements in that program vary from 88.53 percent and 100 percent, he said.

The Brockman Road project is estimated to cost \$462,143, which the department also hopes to get fully reimbursed, Brunet said.

To avoid the problem of liquefaction that was caused by the earthquake, the roads are being built up in sections using geotechnical fabric so next time there is an earthquake the road will settle uniformly, Brunet said. Liquefaction occurs when the ground beneath the road mixes with water under it and the roads liquefy.

As these projects are priorities and have been expedited through the process, the hope is to have them done by the end of October or early November, he said.

Damage from the earthquake, especially on major streets, has been a priority for the department, he said.

"We're expediting this as fast as we can," he said.

Other roads that fall under the Federal Highway Administration will take several more months before the plans can be brought to the board, Brunet said. They have been categorized as permanent restoration as opposed to emergency opening work.

Those roads include Austin Road south of Interstate 8, Worthington Road at the New River, Evan Hewes Highway at the New River, McConnel Road south of Keystone Road, Brockman Road at Greeson Drain, Forrester Road at the New River and Harris Road west of Dogwood Road.

Drew and Brockman roads were categorized as emergency opening work, which has allowed the county to move forward with the repair work now, he said.

Other roads that still need repairs fall under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's jurisdiction, and

include Lyons Road at the New River, Westmorland Road at Dixie Drain and Hetzel Road at Salt Creek, he said. Those projects need to have environmental work done before they can go before the board.