

Sinkhole found as work begins on Drew Road

Elizabeth Varin, Imperial Valley Press Staff, 1-25-11

After peeling back the asphalt and a layer of concrete, workers found empty space that used to be the foundation of Drew Road.

An 8-foot sinkhole was found last week on a portion of the closed road, and work will begin today to repair a water pipe beneath the area and move forward with the project.

“The discovered sinkhole is large enough to have a large truck fallen through and have caused severe injury to the occupants and extensive vehicle damage,” Imperial County Public Works Director William Brunet said.

“This is the reason why the Imperial County Department of Public Works closed a seemingly good road to the traveling public after the earthquake.

“There are hidden problems that cannot be seen by visible inspection,” he said.

The road next to Sunbeam Lake and south of Interstate 8 has been closed since the 7.2-magnitude earthquake last April damaged it. The road will continue to be closed until work is completed, which is expected no later than the beginning of April, Brunet said.

“The department wants to get it repaired as fast as we can, properly, and get the road open,” he said.

The Imperial Irrigation District is scheduled to start work today to repair the pipeline that broke, said Michael Cooke, construction engineering coordinator with the county. Those repairs should take two or three days.

The construction company hired to fix the road has moved south of the interstate to repair another portion damaged by the earthquake, he said. Once the pipeline is fixed next to Sunbeam Lake, the company will finish work there.