

Damaged railroad crossing on State Road 56 will be replaced – and street closed

Written by Marty Randall

Wednesday, 25 August 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 25 August 2010 09:17

Motorists who travel over the railroad crossing on State Road 56 West, known locally as West McClain Avenue in Scottsburg, will rejoice to learn that plans are to replace the damaged crossing in mid-September. But the job is going to take from Monday, September 13, through Saturday, September 18, and that means traffic on S.R. 56 will somehow be detoured off one of Scottsburg's main arteries throughout the project. Signs announcing the closure were posted on the railroad crossing on Wednesday morning, August 18. A telephone survey of city officials that afternoon indicated that the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

had the signs posted prior to notifying such agencies as the Mayor's Office, Scottsburg City Police Department, city engineer Bill Saegesser's office and Scott School District 2. Generally, each official, when told of the signs announcing the closure had pretty much the same response, "What?" "No one has contacted District 2," advised David Wells, director of transportation for the county's largest school district. He quickly added, "There's no doubt that crossing needs to be replaced. It's in terrible shape. I'm sure we can route our buses around it with little trouble."

Wells is right: The crossing has brought more comments to the Mayor's Office in recent months than 'most any other topic. Local motorists who are familiar with the crossing and its uneven surface as one is driving east have been noted swinging wide to the left or right to avoid its worst spot. Drivers unlucky enough to be unaware of the crossing's condition are assured of a jolting ride sure to test any vehicle's tires and suspension.

City engineer Bill Saegesser said the signs posted on the railroad crossing's poles came as a surprise to him. "Last word we had from INDOT was that the crossing was going to be fixed this month, not September," he related. "It's good news that they're finally going to fix it."

Saegesser said he is now concerned with the detour route which INDOT will have to design to move east- and west-bound traffic through the city during that week of closure. "We need to know as soon as possible so that we have a chance to get out and look at the condition of the roads on the detour and make sure this is going to work," he said. According to Marvin Jenkins, INDOT-Seymour public relations representative, that detour is still being worked out by INDOT engineers.

"Right now, all we know is that the crossing and S.R. 56 will be closed September 13 to 18. We should have a definite detour route worked out around Labor Day weekend," Jenkins stated.