

Faribault Daily News Article  
Development Update  
Tim Madigan, City Administrator

The purpose of this column is to provide updates and background on projects you have been reading about in the Daily News recently.

### **Highway 60 West**

There are a variety of development projects taking place on both sides of Interstate 35 on Highway 60. This activity is partially a result of the intergovernmental partnerships between the City of Faribault, Rice County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Much of the development around Western Avenue and Highway 60, including the Wal-Mart Super Center, is the result of storm water infrastructure improvements financed through a tax abatement project jointly done by the city and county. No direct subsidies were paid to Wal-Mart for their expansion, but the storm water improvements helped to make this and other development projects in this area possible.

Wal-Mart originally planned to relocate from their current West Mall location to the west side of I35. After several years' worth of discussion, however, the Faribault City Council was able to persuade the retail giant to instead expand their current location. With 210,000 square feet of retail space, Faribault's Wal-Mart is the second largest in Minnesota.

West of I35 on Highway 60, earth work is being done by developers in anticipation of future big box retail development, as well as by the City for improvements to Highway 60. Using utility franchise fees, the City worked out an agreement with MnDOT to rebuild the section of Highway 60, from I35 West to Canby Avenue. This project was started in September and will be completed in June of 2008. In May and June of next year, people can expect a traffic detour while Highway 60 is closed for reconstruction.

In upcoming years, look for development activity on the north and south sides of Highway 60, as well as the relocation of the Sakatah Singing Hills Trail north to the Cannon River area.

### **Park Avenue North**

The Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA) recently held its grand opening for this \$180 million power plant, the largest construction project in Faribault's history. This project was made possible by the extension of Park Avenue North with a special assessment arrangement with MMPA, in addition to a creative financing project utilizing Rice County and City of Faribault funds. The extension of the Park Avenue corridor also allowed for the construction of SAGE Electrocromics, Willow Creek Concrete, and Renneberg Hardwoods, Inc.

Furthermore, this project permitted the Aldi's Distribution Center to be constructed on the west side of I35. In order for this to happen, it was necessary to bring utilities to the MMPA site and then extend them under I35. Without the extension of Park Avenue it would not have been possible to service the Aldi's site.

### **New City Facilities**

An open house for the new City Public Works facility at 1200 Belview Trail will be held on October 30, 2007, starting at 2:00 pm. This will be an opportunity for the public to tour the completed Public Works building. This building replaces a 50 year old structure on First Avenue that formerly housed the public works departments. The new building was built with the expectation that it should serve the city's needs for another 50 years.

The City Council is in the process of authorizing plans and specifications for a new 21,000 square foot Police facility at the site of the former public works building on First Avenue. The Police department is currently located in the Rice County Law Enforcement Center. The City and County participated in the funding of the construction of the LEC in the mid-70's and it has served the needs of both law enforcement agencies for the last 30 years. Now, however, the facility is not adequate for either department.

### **New Military Armory facility**

The US Army Reserve and the Minnesota National Guard are joining forces to construct a new armory facility in Faribault on West Airport Road, south of the City airport. This project is made possible by a Congressional appropriation of \$14 million for the combined facility. The City is partnering with the Reserve and Guard on the construction of this project by donating 29 acres of land south of the airport for the facility.

Additionally, the facility will contain community enhancements such as a new gymnasium and classrooms. The City will be contributing just over a \$1 million toward these community enhancements, and the State of Minnesota is contributing an additional \$750,000 for the enhancements.

This 53,000 square foot facility will begin construction next year and is anticipated to be completed in 2009. Once the US Army Reserve and National Guard move into the new facility, the armories on Highway 60 and Park Avenue will be sold. Because land for the Guard facility was originally donated by the City, it will retain some of the proceeds from the sale.

The aforementioned projects are merely a sample of the many development ventures that our community is undergoing. Developing new facilities and improving the older ones are just two of the ways Faribault can help ensure a vibrant and prosperous future.