I.F.-to-Rigby highway to be finished

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Thirteen highway construction contracts that will cost an estimated $42 million are scheduled to be awarded over the next three years to improve eastern Idaho highways and to way arterial syspump more money into its economy.

John Sessions

Those were the glad tidings reported by Rep. John Sessions, R-Driggs, chairman of the House Transportation and Defense Committee, who has been the catalyst for Idaho's highway program.

During 1969-84 while Sessions has been committee chairman, an estimated $150 million was spent on eastern Idaho highway projects. This is exclusive of the several millions in federal funds spent on highway repairs following the Teton Dam disaster in June 1976.

Sessions said the Idaho Transportation Department plans to open bids in June for the long-awaited addition of two more lanes of freeway to the existing two lanes between Ucon and Rigby. It is expected to be advertised in April or May, Sessions said. Estimated cost is $2.2 million.

The second phase of the project between Ucon and Willow Creek, at the Idaho Falls' northern edge, will be advertised in August with the contract expected to be awarded by early fall. This project calls for adding two more lanes for 3.63 miles at an estimated cost of $2.83 million.

These two projects will complete a four-lane freeway between Idaho Falls and St. Anthony on U.S. Highway 20.

"These two projects," said Sessions, "are in the public's best interest. They will accommodate the greatest number of motorists in east Idaho and eliminate a travel bottleneck."

Two projects already have been started and are scheduled for completion this year.

One includes reconstruction of U.S. 26 at Granite Hill for 4.4 miles towards Swan Valley. J.J. Welcome Co., Redmond, Wash., holds the $4,663,931 contract and it is slated to be ready for plantmix application this fall.

Another is on State Highway 33 at Clementsville east for reconstruction of grades and paving. Bannock Paving Co., Pocatello, holds the $2,464,538 contract for the 5.3 miles. The gravel surface is now in use and the contractor will begin paving in the spring with the roadway to be completed by mid-summer, said Sessions.

Other projects listing location, estimate cost, length, type of work and expected advertising date, respectively, follow:

- Interchange U.S. 20 and Lewisville Highway, $5.2 million, 3 miles, new structures and complete interchange, 1987 midyear.
- West Broadway in Idaho Falls urban project, $1 million for right-of-way and $1.3 million for roadway reconstruction, Broadway bridge west to U.S. 20 interchange for .5 miles, fiscal year 1986.
- Driggs west, $410,000, 5 miles, fix soft spots with 2 inch overlay and seal coat, March of 1985.
- Bates road, $950,000, 5 miles; grading, drainage and paving, spring of 1985, with the county having to acquire the right-of-way.
- Interstate 1-15, Sage Junction to Hamer, $1.580,000, 7.1 miles, plantmix overlay and seal coat, January of 1985.
- Interstate 1-15 Bingham County Line to Idaho Falls, $3,640,000, 7.7 miles, plantmix pavement and seal coat, January of 1986.
- State Highway 33 from State Highay 32 west, $3,120,000, 5.7 miles, reconstruction of grade and paving, spring of 1986.
- State Highway 33 between State Highway 32 and Hatches Corner in Tetonia, $920,000 2.2 miles including Teton Main Street, spring of 1988.
- State Highway 48 bridges, $690,000; four canal structures at Burgess, Rudy, Clark-Edwards and North Rudy in Rigby and Ririe area, reconstruct existing bridges, February of 1985.