

March 2020 City News



City of Fosston | 220 1st St E | Fosston, MN 56542 | 218-435-1959 | 218-435-1961 fax | www.fosston.com

Minnesota Cold Weather Rule— Protection Ends April 15th

If you have trouble paying your utility bills during the winter season and have not made payment arrangements with Fosston Municipal Utilities, you may be subject to disconnection on April 15th. If you need help paying your natural gas or electric utility bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualifications and application information, contact Inter County Community Council at 218-796-5144 or Polk County Social Services at 435-1585. If you are not eligible to receive assistance, please contact Fosston Municipal Utilities at 435-1737 prior to April 10th to discuss a payment schedule.

Coming Events

- *City Council Meeting—March 9, 7pm*
- *Tango & Cash—Saturday, April 4th*
- *Arbor Day—April—date TBD*
- *Easter Egg Hunt—Saturday, April 11, 11:00am—Fosston Elementary playground.*
- *Memorial Day Program—Monday, May 25, 10:30am—New Journey Church | 12pm program at Veterans Memorial*

Cable TV Price Increase

The City of Fosston Cable TV today announced its new rate for basic cable service. The new rate for basic service will be \$62.50 per month and will be effective with the bill you receive on April 10, 2020.

In announcing the new rate, City Administrator Chuck Lucken said, “We’ve done our best to keep rates as low as possible, but the costs of doing business continues to rise. Therefore, this increase was necessary for us to maintain our current level of programming and service.”

According to Lucken, factors in the decision include large increases in subscriber rates paid to programmers for services such as ESPN, Fox Sports Net, local broadcast stations WDAY, KVLV, KVRR and KXJB. Local channel costs have increased at an extraordinary rate. The sharply escalating fees paid to programmers is the major factor in the decision to raise cable rates.

At less than \$63 per month and no contract required, Fosston Cable TV, with more than 60 channels available, is still the best entertainment value around compared to Dish Network, DirecTV and other local providers. Fosston basic cable service is still priced at just over \$2.00 per day, providing customers with a wide selection of programming choices every month.

In February, Fox business channel was launched on channel 63. We continue to work to provide the best service and viewing options for our customers.

Highway 2 Study Update

The City of Fosston is currently performing a Highway 2 Corridor Study. The study is funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), District 2. The City hired Karvacko, P.A. of Bemidji who partners with a traffic engineering firm in Minnesota to perform the engineering of the study.

Safety was identified as the number one concern early in the process. It is important to remember that Fosston is unlike many other cities as its high school is directly along the highway 2 corridor. This gives a stronger need for safety and speed control along highway 2. Given this opportunity, the City of Fosston intends to do what it can to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists along highway 2. It is the City's intention to install rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB's) at the crossing between the high school and LePiers Gas Station/Burggraf's Ace Hardware as part of any future plans to improve pedestrian safety. RRFB's provide a safer crossing for pedestrians and would work within a 3 lane configuration. If four lanes are maintained, the only way a RRFB would be allowed would be with a center refuge island on the highway.

Here are some Frequently Asked Questions & Answers:

Why would we consider a 3-lane option?

- It would reduce vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts that contribute to rear-end, left turn, and sideswipe crashes.
 - Vehicles on side-streets can more comfortably enter the mainline roadway because there are fewer lanes to cross. It can also reduce side-street delay.
 - Separating left turning traffic has been shown to reduce delays at intersections.
 - It helps provide more consistent traffic flow because of the reduced speed differential.
 - It makes crossing the roadway easier for pedestrians, as they have one fewer lane to cross and are exposed to moving traffic for a shorter period of time.
 - Can improve emergency response times as a center turn lane and wider shoulders allow traffic to move aside more quickly. The center turn lane provides a more predictable path for the emergency response vehicle.
 - They present an opportunity to re-plan the roadway space for wider shoulders, turn lanes, parking lanes, improved intersection turn radius and pedestrian crossing improvements.
- Is a low-cost solution, particularly in cases where only pavement marking modifications are needed.

If you remove a travel lane, won't the traffic backup with congestion?

- No. Typically 3-lane sections do not adversely affect travel times within a corridor; rather, clearing travel lanes of left-turning traffic actually improves operations.

For example, when a corridor has numerous access points (driveways), the majority of through traffic tends to utilize the outside travel lanes to avoid being delayed by left turning vehicles slowing and stopping in the inside travel lanes. These types of 4-lane corridors essentially behave like a three-lane road. As such, when these 4-lane corridors are converted to a three-lane section, they are unlikely to increase congestion.

Why do you provide so much information on the 3-lane option? It sounds like your mind is made up.

Like many traffic safety concepts, changing to a 3-lane corridor can be counter intuitive. So it requires that more information be provided in order to provide greater context on why to consider it. MnDOT will only implement a 3-lane section if the City of Fosston supports and requests it.

Would it be possible to go back to a 4-lane if it's found that the 3-lane didn't work out as intended?

Yes. If the 3-lane option is selected, the corridor would be re-striped in 2022 which would allow for the option to be verified prior to any permanent changes made with the 2028 construction project.

A meeting of the city council will be held at a date and time yet to be determined to make a formal recommendation to the Minnesota Department of Transportation on what the City would support for the 2028 construction season. Again, if a 4 to 3 lane conversion is recommended there will be a re-striping done in 2022 which would allow for the option to be verified prior to permanent changes in 2028.
