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PRESS RELEASE

City of Abilene Anticipates Opening E. First Street to Traffic

January 7, 2013 - The City of Abilene, Kansas recently met with representatives from Smoky Hill, LLC, the Contractor for the E. First Street Project, to determine the anticipated schedule for the remainder of the Project.

The Contractor expects to be prepared to open E. First Street east from Brady Street on or before the evening of Friday, January 11th. Additionally, the Contractor expects to be prepared to open E. First Street from Buckeye Avenue to Campbell Street by Friday, January 18th. The section of E. First Street from Campbell Street to Brady Street will be considered for opening following the completion of private driveways.

The decision to open E. First Street in either case, assumes that the weather cooperates over the next few weeks to allow the Contractor to complete several key pieces of the remaining Project. Snowfall or other unanticipated weather conditions may delay the street opening from these dates.

The Contractor has started to install regulatory signs (i.e., stop signs, speed limit signs, etc.) along the Project corridor. Temporary pavement markings will also be installed until permanent markings may be installed in the spring.

The Project was originally scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2012. Various circumstances, including recent snow events, have forced the Project to be slightly delayed from the anticipated schedule.

"The City and the Contractor understand that the Project has been inconvenient for the public, especially those residents living along the Project corridor," says City Manager David Dillner. "We have to balance the schedule for opening the street to traffic with the desire to complete the Project in a safe and effective manner. All scheduling decisions are based on the weather conditions and are adjusted to ensure that the final product is able to provide long-term value for the community."

Mayor Dennis Weishaar appreciates the public's cooperation with the Project. "The public has been very understanding throughout the duration of the Project. The Contractor is working hard to ensure that the Project is done correctly while also trying to expedite the Project's completion. The City appreciates everyone's cooperation throughout this process."

Following completion of the Project, the City will maintain the existing two-way designation of Cottage Street until the Buckeye Avenue/First Street Geometric Improvement Project is completed. The City, in partnership with the Kansas Department of Transportation, will make improvements to the intersection of Buckeye Avenue and First Street.

After the geometric project is finished, the City will review the existing designation to determine whether to continue the two-way designation or return it to the previous one-way designation. The Buckeye Avenue/First Street Geometric Improvement Project is anticipated to begin construction in Spring 2014.

Questions regarding the E. First Street Project may be directed to Public Works Director Lon Schrader at (785) 263-3510 or City Manager David Dillner at (785) 263-2550.

