

Tahlequah, OK

Since Tuesday, Tahlequah Public Works Authority's Wastewater Collections crew has been working on Bluff Avenue.

For the next six months, parts of Bluff Avenue will be closed a section at a time. Bluff Avenue between Downing and Boone will be the first section closed. The wastewater line in the street must be replaced before the street is resurfaced by the City of Tahlequah's Street Department.

The crew, under the direction of Barry Tucker, TPWA's Field Operations Director for Wastewater Collections, is replacing a 6-inch clay line with SDR 35 PVC 8-inch pipe.

"We have needed to upgrade the line," said Tucker. "The line is too small and it has been in the ground too long because it has begun to crack."

The seven-person crew working on the street will complete its portion of the project within a month. They will replace 730 feet of pipe with the new 8-inch line and three of the four manholes on the street

"This is cut and dry for us. We foresee no major problems," said Tucker. "This is the only place on Bluff that we have sewer in the road."

The road will open for use on Friday around noon through the Labor Day weekend. Tucker said all equipment will be removed for the holiday weekend and his crew will resume on Tuesday.

Frank Macario, Director of TPWA's Field Operations of Water Distribution, along with Brandon Qualls, TPWA's Foreman of Water Distribution, said their crew will begin working Tuesday morning on Bluff Avenue and South Street.

"We have a crew of six who will be replacing a 4-inch cast iron water line to a 6-inch PVC line," said Macario. "The 4-inch pipe has been there since the 1950s and needs to be replaced."

It will take 3,500 feet of pipe to replaced what is there and Qualls said it will take four to six months depending on the weather.

"We will be closing a section of Bluff at a time," said Qualls. "There will be a detour route in place while this is going on. The street will be closed to through traffic, but people living in the area will have access to their driveways. The road will be accessible on the weekends."

Macario said TPWA will be in and out as quickly as possible but there will be times that the water will be shut off for no more than three hours at a time.

"We do not foresee anything going wrong, but this is a complicated procedure," he said.

Macario said his crew would be placing the new line in with the old line. The two must stay in place until the new line is activated and then the old line will be abandoned

Mike Doublehead, TPWA General Manager, said the city will resurface Bluff Avenue after TPWA is finished.

"We ask for our customers' patience while we make improvements to our infrastructure," said Doublehead.