

GDOT Improving Milledgeville/Baldwin County Roads and Infrastructure

By Catherine Dean

In the past twelve months Milledgeville and Baldwin County have benefited from the completion of several multi-million dollar projects coordinated by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

The GDOT's Baldwin Safe Routes to School (BSRTS) program, partnered with local nonprofit Live Healthy Baldwin, is working to provide opportunities for children to safely walk and bike to school. This project is intended to create a nine-mile bicycle/pedestrian trail that will travel east to west, and will connect neighborhoods to schools.

According to Kyle Collins, district communications specialist for the GDOT, a portion of the BSRTS program is now complete. "The pedestrian bridge and sidewalk on Blandy Road-a \$1.3 million project-was completed in early March by Gregory Bridge Company and measures 180-foot-by-9-foot," he said.

The sidewalk stretches 1,900 feet from Blandy Hills Elementary to Creekside Elementary, along Blandy Road, turning along South ABC Street and Stadium Drive, up to North ABC Street. There is also a cross walk linking Blandy Hills and Creekside.

"The pathways provide safer travel for teachers, children, and parents frequenting the cluster of schools on Blandy," said Collins.

The much-anticipated Fall Line Freeway (FLF) was completed in recent months and offers travelers a faster route to destinations throughout Central Georgia. The FLF links Augusta, Macon, and Columbus-extending from state line of South Carolina to the Alabama line-and runs through both Wilkson and Baldwin counties.

One of Milledgeville's most traveled roads, US 441/North Columbia Street, is currently undergoing a \$2.57 million resurfacing project. Beginning at Lakeside Drive and running to Marshall Road, and should to be completed by the end of May.

State Routes (SR) 22 and 49 also have resurfacing projects in the works. The \$1.66 million resurfacing of SR 22 will begin this summer, overseen by Reeves Construction Company, and will include rehabilitating shoulders from the Jones County line east of the Little Fishing Creek bridge in Baldwin for a total of 7.08 miles. Completion of the SR 22 project is October 2017.

Resurfacing of SR 49, also awarded to Reeves Construction Company, is a \$3.3 million project that will span 11 miles from the Jones County line to Elbert Street in downtown Milledgeville.

In addition to current construction, future GDOT projects for the county and city continue to be scheduled. With an estimated completion date of July 2017, the 4.17 miles of milling, plant

mix resurfacing, and single treatment paving will begin at US 441 Bypass/SR 29 and extend to SR 22 (Montgomery Street). The \$1.93 million contract was awarded to C and H Paving Inc.

Looking forward to 2018, the GDOT has further improvements planned for SR 49. With a current cost estimate marked at \$8.44 million, the project consists of 2.8 miles of widening beginning west of Felton Drive and extending to the west side of Fishing Creek Bridge in Baldwin County.

“The widening of SR 49 is much needed and will be a great asset to Baldwin County,” said Collins. “When completed, additional center and right turn lanes will be added in the existing passing lane sections.”

The widening project will also include construction of urban shoulders-curbs, gutters, and sidewalks-at Blandy Road on both the left and right side and extending to south of Fishing Creek Bridge. A traffic light is also planned for the intersection of Blandy Road and SR 49.

“Once the traffic light is installed at Blandy and 49, it will add yet another layer of safety for the heavily traveled intersection,” added Collins.

According to Collins, the improvements to local roads and infrastructures would not be possible without taxpayers and the passing of House Bill 170-the Transportation Funding Act of 2015. The bill provides for additional revenue necessary for funding transportation purposes.

“When you see road and highway construction occurring throughout Milledgeville and Baldwin County, you see your tax dollars truly at work,” said Collins. “The future looks very bright for our region’s ability to improve infrastructure.”