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Cramer and Associates from Grimes, Iowa, have been working on the old river bridge at the east end of Main Street. The floor of the bridge has been replaced and trusses under the bridge have been strengthened or replaced. New guardrails are being made from the high span to the end of Main Street. Paving of the bridge under the span is complete and the county will come in next week to finish the paving in the guardrail area. The bridge should be ready to open by April.

OLD RIVER BRIDGE BEING REPAIRED

Several years ago, the old bridge across the river at the east end of Cedar Rapids' Main Street was closed to traffic due to huge holes in the paving and flooring and other unsafe conditions. The County Commissioners didn't want to replace the bridge and had been refusing to even repair it. The street and roads supervisors for the town had done what they could over the years, but the bridge kept getting worse. The town didn't feel that the bridge was town responsibility as it was right outside city limits. The bridge got a lot of use from townsfolk who used it to access the former city dump, now the tree dump, and many people fished from the bridge. Closing it meant that people taking yard refuse, tree branches and whole trees had to go to the highway and around to the back road to the dump area.

But a few years ago, the county commissioners decided they would request a grant to repair the bridge and the grant was obtained. But work still didn't begin until this month.

Cramer and Associates from Grimes, Iowa, have had a crew in the area for the past couple of weeks working on the bridge. According to Jeff Thompson, supervisor of the job, their part of the work will be completed this week and they will be leaving sometime Thursday afternoon. They have replaced the floor of the bridge, strengthened the underpinning and are about to finish the guardrails along the sides from the old high spans to the

end of Main Street. They will be paving the area from the east end to the west end of the spans, but the county will then come in to finish paving the bridge between the guardrails. Work should be finished, Thompson said, by the first part of April and the bridge will then be opened again.

Word has been received that the bridge repairs would be started right away many times over the past couple of years but nothing was done, so when word went around this time, there were lots of doubtful heads being shaken. However, this time the rumor is true and the bridge is actually being repaired. It will be very much appreciated by the townsfolk not to have

to drag large branches down the highway anymore, as well as to be able to trust their fishing and biking kids not to fall through. Having a safe bridge again will be great.

The Cramer crew has had some minor accidents while working on the bridge. Elsewhere in this issue is the story of one of the crew taking an early ... and unexpected ... Polar Dip. Monday afternoon, a spark ignited dry grass along the river near the bridge and the fire department was called out. The fire didn't blaze far, and the crew had it nearly out with their fire extinguishers before the firemen got there to finish the job, they said. The firemen wetted the area down well to be sure it wouldn't blaze up again.



A spark from the work being done on the river bridge caused a small grass fire along the edge of the river Monday afternoon.



Cedar Rapids, Nebraska, February 27, 2015

PREDIPPER AWARDED WITH POLAR DIP GEAR!



Just east of Cedar, the “old bridge” is being renovated by quite a few hard workers. They have worked cold or shine... and now dry or wet. Early last week one of the workers “pre-dipped” into the river, coveralls and all! It was told he slipped off a platform on the east side of the river and went on in for a quick swim. The Polar Dip group heard of his misfortune and officially named him “Predipper of 2015”, and presented him with a Polar Dip tshirt. We will let the dipper remain anonymous (mostly because we forgot to ask his name), but we’d like to congratulate him for his efforts. (Photo and article by Greger Graphics)