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Old Hastings Road Bridge work completion delayed longer than anticipated

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The Old Hastings Road Bridge over Egan Creek in Faraday Township will take longer to complete than previously anticipated. While initial estimates late last year had put the construction end date by late fall of this year, unforeseen challenges in the work to be done has pushed that back to Dec. 15 as of Nov. 19. On Nov. 22, the township sent out a press release saying the work would be delayed indefinitely as the construction company doing the work, National Structures Inc., had ceased operations, but that Faraday would be looking at getting other contractors to finish work on the bridge as soon as possible.

Faraday Township put out a tender on Oct. 1, 2020 for an engineering firm to look at designing, tearing down and rebuilding the Old Hastings Road Bridge. The tendering process closed on Oct. 21, 2020 and at their Nov. 4, 2020 council meeting, it was announced that D.M. Wills Associates Ltd. had been awarded the contract for the engineering and design work. It was subsequently announced that National Structures Inc. had been contracted to do the construction work to replace the bridge.

The previous concrete structure of this bridge on Old Hastings Road was of unknown age, and had deteriorated so much that replacement was the only tenable way forward. The overall cost for replacement was put at almost $800,000. Dawn Switzer, the clerk and treasurer, revealed that the bridge was being paid for through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding, in which the provincial and federal governments pay for 2/3 of the project.

Ultimately, Faraday Township got back two quotations for the work, which were opened Oct. 21, 2020 by Switzer, road superintendent Scott Laundry and office assistant Sarah Jenkins.

D.M. Wills Associates Ltd. submitted a bid of $74,369 plus HST while Jewell Engineering put in a bid for $80,125 plus HST. Council followed Laundry's recommendation that they accept the bid from D.M. Wills Associates Ltd. which they did. D.M. Wills Associates Ltd. subsequently got to work on the project soon thereafter. Professional engineer David Bonsall with D.M. Wills and Associates told The Bancroft Times late last year that they were looking to get started on the construction by July, 2021 and finish up by late fall of this year.

According to Switzer, there had been some unforeseen challenges on the work on the Old Hastings Bridge that had caused the completion of the project to be delayed.

?In regards to the bridge on Old Hastings Road, the circumstances that have delayed the completion were due to extra piles needed to support the abutment footings and the dewatering issues due to the high-water levels,? she says.

As of Nov. 19, Switzer hoped that the work would be done by Dec. 15, depending on weather conditions. On Nov. 22, however, she sent out a press release stating that the company doing the construction on the bridge, National Structures Inc., had ceased operations, and would not be completing the work on Old Hastings Road bridge.

?The township is taking measures to have the work completed by other contractors as quickly as possible. However, the closure of the road is extended until the work is completed,? she says. ?We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.?