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For Immediate Release

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Stimulus money approved for County Highway KD

County Executive Jim Kreuser announced today that \$671,359 in Federal Economic Stimulus Funding for improvements to County Highway KD was endorsed by Gov. Jim Doyle and approved unanimously by the state Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance.

“This paves the way for the county to make KD park a reality,” Kreuser said. “The money allows for important safety improvements to be made so that families will be able to easily enter and exit the proposed park.”

The county highway was one of 66 local road and bridge projects, totaling \$53.23 million in Federal Stimulus money, approved by the state committee.

The county portion of the total cost of the project, which is \$682,275, will be about \$10,000. The project involves reconstructing a segment of County Highway KD to current design standards and will include turning and passing lanes at what will be the entrance to the proposed park.

There is also a bike and pedestrian path component that will eventually connect the planned park to the Village of Twin Lakes. The bike and pedestrian path won't be built as part of the Federal Stimulus portion of the project, but will be accommodated in the plans, Kreuser said.

Federal Stimulus money from the Workforce Investment Act's Summer Youth Employment Program paid for a crew of young men and women to build two trail shelters and to level brush to create two and a half miles of trails at the proposed park site, Kreuser said. There are now more than three miles of completed trails at the KD site, he said.

Kenosha County purchased the former gravel pit on County Highway KD, between State Highway 50 to the north and County Highway F to the south in the towns of Wheatland and Randall, about eight years ago with the idea of transforming it into a public park. The project had been idle until Kreuser began working with the county Highway and Parks Committee, officials from Twin Lakes and the Towns of Randall and Wheatland, and area residents, to revive the park plan.

County Board Supervisor Dennis Elverman, who is chairman of the Highway and Parks Committee, said the road improvements were the key to advancing the park plan.

“We’ve waited for this for years,” Elverman said. “Getting the money to get the entryway completed is what has been holding us back. This will actually let us open things up and get people in there a lot quicker than I thought we would.”

Kreuser said the county is exploring partnerships with the area school districts, and higher education officials, to potentially provide a focus on “green” recreational activities and sustainable living education at the proposed park.

“There are many exciting possibilities for the park and we will continue to work with area residents to get their input as plans move forward,” Kreuser said. “But, much depends on the availability of funding. We will work to secure grants and other possible Federal Stimulus money to help make the park a reality.”

Twin Lakes Village President Howard K. Skinner said he is pleased the road improvement will mean the park project is moving forward.

“County Executive Kreuser said this was a priority and he meant what he said. We’re looking forward to the park becoming a reality,” Skinner said. “I’m also pleased that the trails at the planned park will also interconnect with our already in place recreational trails. It’s going to be a great asset to Twin Lakes and Randall.”

Robert Stoll, Randall Town chairman, said the County Executive heard the excitement about the potential park project from area residents at a listening session held last year.

“County Executive Kreuser came to our listening session and obviously he had his ears open,” Stoll said. “This will be a wonderful addition for the residents of our area.”

Other local road projects approved by the Joint Committee on Finance on Thursday were: City of Kenosha, 80th Street, resurfacing; and Town of Somers, Sheridan Road, pavement replacement.

The Joint Committee on Finance also approved \$4.2 million in Federal Stimulus money for nine transportation enhancement projects, which include: Village of Twin Lakes, East Main Street (Highway Z), streetscape and infrastructure improvements; and Town of Salem, State Highway 83 Pedestrian Access and Safety Project, sidewalk installation.

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