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Morganton Bridge Work Gearing Up in January

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Posted: Wednesday, December 26, 2012 12:00 am

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By Kirsten Ballard

Staff Writer

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For the drivers who traverse the Morganton Road bridge over U.S. 1 every day, the new year will bring some big changes.

Preparing for the six-lane overpass project, construction crews have spent the past month moving utility lines and painting the new road markings.

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will install a concrete median the first week of January that will remain until the end of the project in November 2015.

In the past month, trees on the west side of U.S. 1 were cleared. Crews will begin clearing the east side during the second week of January.

"The traveling public can expect delays. It will be a one-lane road, and clearing that side will be a lengthy project," Ron Van Cleef, assistant resident engineer at NCDOT, said.

Van Cleef estimates that tree clearing will take about a week.

"It's early right now, but we're right on schedule," Van Cleef said.

Through the rest of January, the crews will continue to move utility lines. Van

Cleef says crews will lay pipes on Saunders Road in January, though Saunders Road will eventually be eliminated.

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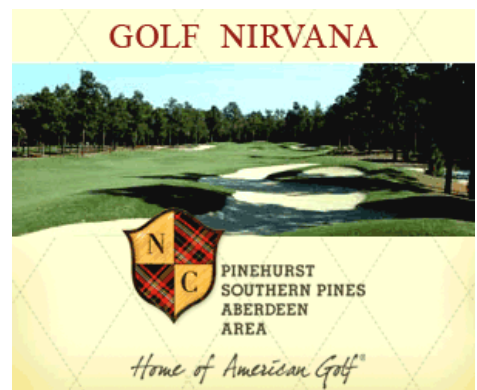


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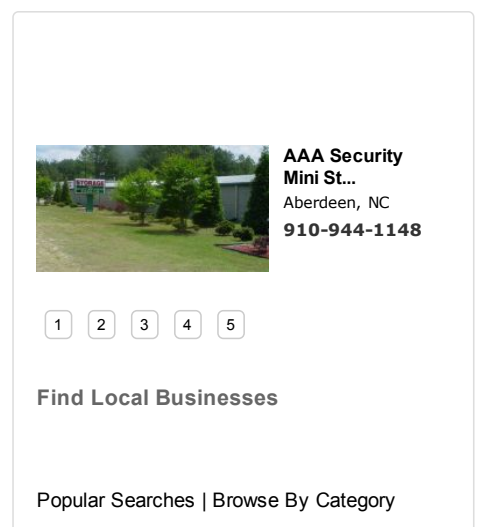
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"And in April we're taking down the light at the Kangaroo (convenience store) too," Van Cleef said.

At the end of January, construction will begin on the bridge. The crews will begin building the replacement bridge. The bridge will be constructed in two phases.

The majority of work will be done at night. Trucks will be parked on the median.

"It shouldn't cause a big problem for the traveling public," Van Cleef said. "We just want everyone to keep their heads up, pay attention to the speed limit, and be careful."

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Physical Address: 145 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Southern Pines, NC
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 58, Southern Pines, NC 28388
910-692-7271 Fax:910-692-9382