

Demolition Work Underway on Old Rulo Bridge

(KLZA)--A 74 year old landmark is coming down. Work is underway to take down the old Missouri River Bridge at Rulo.

Mike Habegger with the Nebraska Department of Roads is in charge of the bridge removal project which carries a price tag of \$1.73-million. Habegger said Tuesday preliminary work actually started a couple of weeks ago on the project. Currently the bridge deck is being cut in sections for removal. The sections are 12 inches thick and are cut into sections ranging from 10 feet by six feet to 10 x 10. The large sections of bridge deck being sawed up currently are being hauled away by local residents.

If you were among those hoping to see the entire bridge tumble into the Missouri River as the result of a huge explosion, that is not how this project is going to work. Habegger says a series of blasts beginning with one over the navigation channel will bring down the bridge that was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1993.

There is quite a bit of preparation work to be done prior to the blasting. Creating obstacles is the amount of houses located near the bridge on the Nebraska side, the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge being just about 50 feet away and a 24-inch natural gas pipeline on the Missouri side of the bridge.

People are naturally curious and would love to be able to watch the demolition. Habegger says the experts will determine how much of an "up close" look the public will be able to get. Boats will be kept a minimum of a half-mile away from the bridge when blasting is done. He says rough estimate is people will need to be 700 – 1600 feet away from the bridge. When the center section is dropped into the river it will land in the actual navigation channel. The contractor will have 24 hours to remove the iron using barges and tugboats with cranes on them. The winter river level of about 10 feet deep should help make that part of the project easier.

Parts of the bridge that come down later, and not in the navigation channel must be removed within a 48-hour time span.

At this point, no dates for blasting have been set.

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