

Bridge is point of contention

Written by Mark Jaeger
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Town officials hope paving project isn't seen as long-term commitment

As bridges go, the span on Cedar Sauk Road is not particularly impressive, but it has become a bit of a contested issue between the Town of Saukville and the Town of Cedarburg.

County records show the bridge over a branch of the Milwaukee River has been maintained by the Town of Cedarburg since it was installed in 1965, repairing it in 1986 and 2002.

However, when the Town of Saukville hired a firm to do paving on Cedar Sauk Road last year, the crew also repaved the 21-foot bridge in the project.

That triggered the need for a follow-up bridge inspection, and resulted in a dispute over who should foot the bill.

The inspection, by the engineering firm Graef-USA, is expected to cost \$1,390.

Although the inspection report and request for payment was originally sent to the Town of Cedarburg, Ozaukee County Highway Department officials have ruled the Town of Saukville should have gotten the bill.

"The Town (of Cedarburg) and I have contacted the state bridge authority and they are in agreement that the bridge should have been labeled as the Town of Saukville as the maintaining town," county Construction Superintendent Mark Banton wrote.

"Since this is now your bridge, you are responsible for the maintenance and any future repairs or replacement."

Banton said the inspection is required so the county can maintain its federally mandated bridge files.

Town Chairman Barb Jobs met recently with county officials in hopes of ironing out the matter and shifting the responsibility for the inspection back to Cedarburg.

"Apparently there is no written agreement on who is responsible for the bridge," Jobs said.

She said the Town of Cedarburg has included the stretch of Cedar Sauk Road in calculating its road aids.

"They've been receiving those payments all of these years," Jobs told the Town Board last week. "Who fixed the bridge? We didn't, but we did pave over it."

Supr. Curt Rutkowski suggested a compromise might be possible.

"If we did the paving in error, we should probably pay for the inspection. But that doesn't mean we should continue to maintain it," Rutkowski said. "There seems to be a paper trail that

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suggests they are responsible for the bridge.”

Jobs said she intends to meet with Cedarburg officials to see if a long-term agreement can be reached.

She then gave the assurance “we won’t be paving it over again.”