

## Council awards 16th Street bid

[BY JOYCE LOBECK, SUN STAFF WRITER](#)

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The construction contract for a road project was awarded to a local contractor by the Yuma City Council during its meeting Wednesday.

DPE Construction of Yuma was the winning bidder for improvements to the 16th Street/Arizona Avenue intersection. The local company's bid of \$2.83 million came in at about \$1 million less than the anticipated cost.

Work is expected to begin in mid-July on the project to reconstruct and widen the heavily traveled intersection. The project includes widening the intersection to three travel lanes in each direction on 16th Street and two lanes in each direction on Arizona Avenue in addition to right- and left-turn lanes on each leg of the intersection. A new traffic signal will provide arrows for protected left turns.

The work also includes the replacement of older, undersized water distribution and transmission lines along with new curbs, gutter, sidewalk, asphaltic concrete pavement, storm drain improvements, street lights, landscaping and traffic signals.

The city of Yuma project will link with the upcoming Arizona Department of Transportation widening of 16th Street from Yuma Palms Regional Center to Arizona Avenue. Bids for the ADOT project are expected to be opened July 24 and work to begin in September. It will widen 16th Street along that stretch of road to seven lanes, including the bridges over Interstate 8 and the railroad.

ADOT has estimated the cost of that project at about \$13 million. The project was awarded \$11.5 million in federal stimulus money through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The council also authorized a grant application in the amount of \$4.5 million for the construction of a new Fire Station No. 1 through the Assistance to the Firefighters Grant Program. The grants for the construction of new fire stations are funded through the federal economic stimulus program and will be awarded on a competitive basis.

Plans call for building the new fire station near the existing one at the corner of Giss Parkway and 3rd Avenue. Estimates are that the project will employ about 142 construction workers.

While no matching funds are required, the city has already invested approximately \$820,000 for architectural fees, site demolition and other miscellaneous costs.

In other business, the council approved a motion to restore last year's funding level of \$80,000 to Heritage Festivals after hearing from constituents earlier in the week and an appeal by Colby Girard at Wednesday's meeting. The council had proposed cutting the organization's funding by \$9,000 in line with other cuts it was making to other outside groups it supports because of the economic downturn.

Girard and others argued, however, that Heritage Festivals shouldn't be cut because it is funded through the 2 percent hospitality tax that was renewed by voters in May with the promise from the city that it would maintain its commitment. Heritage Festivals promotes the downtown area through various special events.

The council agreed, passing a motion by Councilman Cody Beeson to restore the \$9,000 to Heritage Festivals by cutting the allocation to Arizona State Parks.

In addition, the council approved requests for the deferral of development fees, also known as impact fees, for a number of residential development projects. The fees can amount to up to \$20,000 on a house.

In an effort to stimulate the construction industry and provide jobs, the city has agreed to defer the impact fees until the houses are occupied, said City Administrator Mark Watson. This saves the developer the cost of financing the fees during construction and while waiting to sell the homes.

Councilman Paul Johnson noted that impact fees are meant to pay for the cost of growth. However, until a home is occupied, there is no impact on city services.

Requests for the deferral of the fees were made for a portion of Sierra Montana subdivision, Araby Crossing, Citrus Springs, La Quinta at Barkley Ranch and Livingston Ranch Estates.

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