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# Joplin City Council to take final action on data center ordinance

City officials tour data center construction site in north Missouri

BY DEBBY WOODIN  
dwoodin@joplinglobe.com

Final action will come Monday from the Joplin City Council on an ordinance that will regulate data centers in Joplin.

The ordinance was advanced at a meeting Aug. 3 where 13 residents spoke during a public hearing on the proposal. Seven were in favor of the regulations and six against.

The ordinance specifies that data centers will only be allowed in M-2 zoned districts, which is a heavy industrial designation. The ordinance requires the buildings to be placed inside a setback buffer of 300

feet from residential and other kinds of properties. It also sets a noise limit for the facilities of 45 to 50 decibels within 50 feet of a data center's property line if one is built adjacent to a residential area.

Data centers will be required to use closed-loop cooling systems to reduce water demand and require a cool-roof system to minimize glare and site heating.

The ordinance had re-

quired that data center developers obtain a special-use permit from the city for that type of facility; however, a motion was approved to remove that requirement. The motion was made by council member Josh Bard.

Asked Thursday why that requirement was removed, Bard said the reason was "to take it out of the political purview. I would rather make it administrative

than a political decision," Bard said.

Some council members along with City Manager Nick Edwards and Troy Bolander, director of the city's Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services department, along with two Jasper County commissioners, visited a site at Smithville Aug. 5 where a data center is under construction. Smithville is about 20 miles north of Kansas City.

Mayor Rob O'Brian said the invitation to see the project came during a Missouri Municipal League meeting from Smithville's mayor, Damien Boley.

The project was still under construction.

"It was good to understand what the construction phase looks like and the amount of people on-site and what kind of timing it

SEE DATA, 2A



Traffic travels under the Connecticut Avenue bridge on Interstate 44. A groundbreaking will be held later this month for Forward 44, bringing improvements valued at a half-billion dollars.

GLOBE FILE

## IMPROVING I-44

Forward 44 to hit road with groundbreaking this month

BY JOHN HACKER  
jhacker@joplinglobe.com

A groundbreaking for the Forward 44 project, which will bring improvements to Interstate 44 in Southwest Missouri, will be held Monday, Aug. 24, in Springfield.

The event will kick off construction of the nearly half-billion-dollar plan for the interstate.

Although ground is being broken, work on one of the local projects, the Fidelity interchange, will not begin until this winter, according to the Missouri Department of Transportation.

Regan Mitchell, a senior communications specialist with MoDOT's Southwest District, said, "This groundbreaking on Aug. 24 celebrates the start of improvements to I-44 from the corner of Laclede County down to the Oklahoma state line."

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission announced earlier this summer that Capital-CMT Team will serve as

the design-build contractor. The Capital-CMT Team consists of contractor Capital Paving and Construction with designer Crawford Murphy Tilly. Design-build is a project delivery method that combines both the design and construction phases into one contract. The selected contract team completes the design and construction in parallel instead of in succession, which saves time and resources.

Forward 44 is a \$471 million project that will prioritize improvements along the I-44 corridor at five key locations:

- **MAJOR INTERCHANGES** at I-44/Interstate 49 in Fidelity and I-44/Missouri Highway 13 in Springfield.
- **WIDENING** to six lanes in the Springfield area.
- **PAVEMENT** and safety improvements in Greene, Webster and Laclede counties.
- **BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS** at Route EE in Springfield.
- **PAVEMENT IMPROVEMENTS** in Lawrence County.

Mitchell said there will be a later groundbreaking ceremony for the Fidelity interchange following some public meetings, including one in Fidelity to be scheduled this fall.

Although not part of the Forward 44 initiative, the

'We're going to add lanes to I-44 through Joplin and we're working with the city on that because I think they're also going to install like a box culvert that can be used to walk underneath I-44. That's further out, so I don't have dates on that yet.'

Regan Mitchell  
MoDOT senior communication specialist

work will include replacing pavement and widening I-44 to six lanes between Missouri Highway 43 (Main Street) and Loop 49 (Range Line Road). Additional lanes will be installed in the median.

"We will be working on another section in the Joplin area but that will be a separate project," Mitchell said. "We're going to add lanes to I-44 through Joplin and we're working with the city on that because I think

they're also going to install like a box culvert that can be used to walk underneath I-44. That's further out, so I don't have dates on that yet."

Michell also said MoDOT has a website that shows the different places that work that will be done, <https://www.modot.org/projects/forward-44-southwest-i-44-improvements-project>.

"We're really excited. This project has been in the works for so long a time and to actually see, you know, boots and equipment on the ground, it's pretty exciting," Michell said. "And we know construction is not fun. We understand that it can be frustrating, but we also know when it's done our entire area is just — it's going to be great for everyone. We ask for patience from everyone as we work to make I-44 better. Please be patient during construction but when it's done you will enjoy all of the upgrades."

The groundbreaking will begin at 10 a.m. Monday, August 24, at I-44 and Mulroy Road/MO 744 (Exit 84) in Springfield. Attendees can access the event via East Parallel Lane. A MoDOT vehicle with flashing lights will be staged at the entrance, and MoDOT staff will be on-site to direct attendees.



A great blue heron flies across one of the lakes at the Cardinal Valley Restoration Area on Madison Street between Webb City and Oronogo this summer.

GLOBE FILE

## Documentary on Cardinal Valley restoration to be shown Monday

FROM STAFF REPORTS  
news@joplinglobe.com

A documentary on the Cardinal Valley restoration project in Webb City will be shown from 7-8:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17, at the Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center, 201 W. Riviera Drive, in Joplin's Wildcat Park.

The 30-minute documentary, "Cardinal Valley: A Restoration Story," premiered in June at the Route 66 Movie Theater in Webb City.

Monday's event is free and open to the public and will include a question-and-answer session.

For decades, the area between Webb City and Oronogo on north Madison Street was a gravel-filled wasteland contaminated with lead, zinc and other heavy metals left over by a century of mining.

Today, that same area is a little less than 1,000 acres of grassland, wetlands, lakes and trails called the Cardinal Valley Restoration Area.

John Nichols, Webb City's habitat restoration manager, said the project has been a work in progress with rehabilitation starting more than a decade ago with the city looking for a way to use the solid waste from its nearby wastewater treatment plant that otherwise had to be trucked to a landfill at significant expense to the city.

The Environmental Protection Agency was responsible for cleaning up the mining land and chat piles that sat there for decades, but what was left was land that was less than ideal for development.

"After EPA came in and cleaned all this up, we just kind of had all this bare ground," Nichols told the Globe this summer. "So the challenge was for the city to do something productive with it."

He said the area had a combination of factors that made it a candidate for restoration using waste tree limbs that were ground into wood chips and the sludge from the wastewater treatment plant that had too much zinc in it to be applied directly to the ground to create quality compost.

Under Nichols' supervision, the city began applying the compost to the mined area and worked to create a prairie wetland.

After about 12 years, the result is an area with trails, including a part of the planned connector between the Frisco Greenway and Ruby Jack trails, and fishing lakes.