

Total estimate for six recommendations was \$411,450, commission approved initial plans calling for spending only \$40,000

By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader The Seward County Fairgrounds has had a long history of poor drainage after major rain events. The county commission recently hired the firm of EBH & Associates to do a study on the fairgrounds and provide recommendations to the board to improve drainage of the facility.

These improvements would dovetail with those the City of Liberal is now doing on Western Avenue, and commissioners took a step in that direction by approving one of EBH's recommendations Monday.

Joel Krosschell of EBH said his firm had performed the study of the fairgrounds, first doing a topographical survey. This, he said, was to see where elevations are.

"I took those numbers and did some general calculations to figure out where the water's coming from, where it's going to, how much water you have and see what I think would be the best way to take care of the drainage that's out there," he said.

Road and bridge supervisor Tony Herrman said original plans for the fairgrounds had included allowing an inlet inside the fairground wall, which would help with draining the infield there.

"It's a similar situation on the outside of the wall," he said. "If you get that 3, 4 or 5-inch rain, it just can't dissipate fast enough. There's some low spots inside the wall. Some of that can be corrected with shooting elevations and flow if we have a place for it to flow to."

Herrman said putting commercial guttering around the Ag Building and pouring a sidewalk around the building would push water further away from the building than it now goes.

"This would certainly help the situation out there, and for the most part, probably fix it for 95 percent of our rains," he said. "What I'm asking you to consider is allowing us to go ahead and do the inlets on the drainage system that's going down Western, then go out for bids on the sidewalk and the gutter."

Krosschell had six recommendations for upgrades to the fairgrounds, which put the overall projected cost for the improvements at \$411,450.

"Obviously, a project of this size must be budgeted for in phases," said county administrator Mary Bloomer in a memo to the commission. "Therefore, we have a suggestion of priorities the board may want to consider for this year prior to commencement of the fair, with consideration of the balance of the other recommendations in a couple of phases in budget years 2011 and 2012."

County approves drainage upgrades at fairgrounds

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The motion approved by commissioners Monday included installing two storm sewer manholes on the new storm sewer system 90 feet on the west side of Western Avenue at Fairground Lane and Eighth Street by King Enterprises with costs not to exceed \$40,000 to come from the county's reserve for claims fund.