THE BOARD OF BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Angenie McCleary, Chairman * Lawrence Schoen, Vice-Chairman * Jacob Greenberg, Commissioner

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Blaine County
219 1st Avenue South, Suite 208
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To Whom It May Concern:

Adams Gulch Road, Big Wood River Bridge Replacement – Project Update

This letter is to inform you of the upcoming bridge replacement project that will be starting in the near future on Adams Gulch Road spanning the Big Wood River. Over the past few years Blaine County has been working with design professionals, permitting agencies and adjacent neighbors in regards to replacement of the existing bridge on Adams Gulch Road. Multiple public meetings have been held showing layouts, concepts and aesthetics of the bridge, along with indicating the purpose and need of the project. A short summary of the project is provided below.

The **purpose** of this project is to provide a safe crossing of the Big Wood River that is adequate for passenger vehicles, commerce, emergency vehicles, and bicycles and pedestrians. The bridge and associated roadway approaches should meet design standards for bridges and local roads.

The **need** for the project is based on a number of deficiencies. The bridge was constructed in 1963 and has a National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) sufficiency rating of 26.0, which represents a level well below the indicator for replacement. In addition, the bridge span is too short, and the abutments constrict the river, causing erosion around the abutments and severe scouring/undermining of the abutments that could eventually lead to collapse. The bridge is currently rated as structurally deficient.

This bridge is a critical transportation link to either side of the river. If the bridge were to collapse or even temporarily be taken out of service, the impact on the residences would be significant. There is no accessible detour if the bridge were to fail.

The new layout increases the span of the bridge by nearly forty feet, thus reducing the river constraint while improving the hydraulics of the river. A hydraulic model and report has been completed for this section of the river, the report indicates that a slight, localized, rise in water level occurs just downstream of the bridge, due to the restriction of the existing bridge. The new bridge removes the existing encroachment and portions of the partial restriction. By widening the opening, a more natural flow will occur eliminating the existing restriction and drop in the river directly below the bridge. As part of the design process FEMA reviewed the models and provided a letter indicating that any slight increase in water elevation due to removal of existing bridge constriction does not result in any violation. The project of replacing the deficient bridge with a new bridge will have no adverse impacts other than those identified in the River Study, Hydraulic, Biological Evaluation and Wetland Reports, and mitigated to the maximum extent

feasible. After construction of the bridge, a letter of map revision (LOMR) will be completed in accordance with the FEMA process.

As part of the permitting process with various agencies, restrictions were placed on "in water" construction time frames. The allowed construction window is from July 1st to November 30th. With limited construction timeframes and no accessible detour, the bridge will be constructed in phases, with one lane open at all times during construction. Thus, it is expected that this project will encompass two construction seasons with a winter shutdown. During winter shutdown two lanes will remain open.

We look forward to the next phase of this project, and know that it will be a great benefit to the community while improving a deficient bridge structure.

Sincerely,

Angenie McCleary
Chairman

Lawrence Schoen
Vice-Chairman

Jacob Greenberg
Commissioner