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New sidewalks greet Conner students

BY MARK HANSEL • MHANSEL@NKY.COM • AUGUST 20, 2010

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HEBRON - School is back in session in Boone County and students at the Conner High/Middle School campus should have an easier time getting around this year.

A plan to install more than 6,000 feet of sidewalks within a two-mile radius around the campus as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program is nearing completion.

The campus includes Conner High School, Conner Middle School and Goodridge Elementary School, which have 1,300 students combined.

The project took a long time to get underway, but once improvements finally began, the job was completed pretty quickly.

It has been in the works since 2007 when then-Governor Ernie Fletcher presented the grant award in a visit to Conner Middle School. The contract was awarded in January and crews have been working throughout the summer to get most of the work done before school resumed.

The Safe Routes to School Program is designed to improve pedestrian and bicycle routes near schools to provide safe and healthy transportation alternatives.

The Conner campus project was projected to cost \$297,952, and was funded with a \$243,000 grant and storm water reimbursement money from Sanitation District No.1.

Assistant Boone County Administrator Robin Curry has been working on the project for about five years and said the impact goes beyond just the streets included in the project.

"It's a nice addition and once we get it done, it will connect an even greater number of streets," Curry said.

The project includes sidewalks on Limaburg Road to Petersburg Road and Conner Road from Merrie Drive to Goodrich Elementary School.

"Another benefit is that when kids have after-school activities they will now be able to walk through the neighborhoods on sidewalks," Curry said.

The lack of sidewalks in some of the rural neighborhoods has been a priority for some time, Curry said and the county continues to address the issue as funds become available.

Curry said the county has other sidewalk projects on the drawing board, including one at Burlington Elementary School, but no date has been set for that project to begin yet.

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