

March 12, 2019

But what about my mailbox?

Remember the last time you had to call the cable company? Remember the hassle of trying to schedule the cable guy to come to your house and figure out why your internet connection keeps dropping out or why, when you try to binge-watch *The Bachelor*, you get that “something has gone wrong...” error message?

If that makes you tear your hair out, imagine trying to coordinate the cable company for an entire neighborhood - for every resident for half a mile along both sides of the street!

This was just part of the task that WHKS engineers took on when the City of Asbury selected them to upgrade Hales Mill Road, located in Asbury just outside Dubuque, IA. With lots of growth in the area, the existing road's 22-foot width just wasn't up to the increased traffic. 37 feet is the acceptable standard as it allows for that all-important parking space or center turn lane that keeps so many suburban roads flowing.



While there were some geotechnical issues to resolve, the biggest challenge was relocating the extensive utilities under the street. With fiber optics, cable, telephone, electric, water, gas and sewer all sharing subterranean space, coordinating between these historically difficult agencies was just asking for prematurely gray hair.

To be fair, the electric company was as cooperative as possible. But with all the new construction in the Dubuque region, just getting someone out to locate the buried wires in keeping with that “call before you dig!” wisdom, seemed to take forever.



In the end, it would take a year and a half to coordinate and relocate all the utilities under the street. Along the way, the City and the engineers kept all the residents up to date on the project and the effect it would have on them. Weekly construction updates were prepared and distributed on-line or by email along with a willingness to answer any and every question.

And during all that complex coordination and high-tech installation between seven utilities, the City, the Iowa DOT and the community, what was the biggest concern? The lowly mailbox. But residents needn't worry - all the mailboxes were relocated as a part of the work.

