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Palm Bay begins water-pipe replacement

Project replaces lines with better tubes

*BY LINDA JUMP
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The Palm Bay Utilities Department this week began a two-year project to replace 1,400 galvanized water pipes with polyethylene tubing that officials say won't degrade.

"With the new pipe in place, residents in the area will benefit from better water pressure, water quality and water flow," said Utilities Director Jason Yarborough.

The work begins along the Port Malabar Boulevard corridor east of Babcock Street and is confined to the oldest section of the city east of Interstate 95 and north of the C-1 Canal.

Beginning Tuesday, work will be along Creel Road Northeast, Cromey Road Northeast and Voyager Street Northeast. Work will be done between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

City public works crews will do the work. The first year's cost is estimated at \$218,000, and the second year at \$129,000.

The galvanized pipes are decades old and were installed by General Development Utilities Inc. "The new pipes are more corrosive resistant and provide better water quality," Yarborough said.

To coincide with the pipe replacement, which requires excavations, utility crews also will install radio frequency water meters that allow reading to be transmitted to a data logging system.

"This new system will provide more accurate readings and ultimately reduce the department's operating expenses associated with reading meters," Yarborough said.

Customers will be notified prior to the start of work. Water service for some customers may be shut down for the project on a house-by-house or neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. "Customers will also notice various companies in the area and possibly multi-colored paint marks and flags. Please do not remove flags or paint because these indicate the locations for other types of buried utilities such as electricity, phone, gas and cable," Yarborough said.

He said the goal is as little disruption as possible. The city will restore rights of way where work is under way as soon as possible.

Contact Jump at 409-1423 or ljump@floridatoday.com.
