

Marquette expected to be site of busy construction season

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The city of Marquette is expected to be bustling with construction activity as work continues on a number of ongoing projects or ground is broken on new developments this year.

The millions of dollars being invested into our community will sustain those local jobs already established at the organizations going through developments, as well as provide work for many general laborers and contractors during the construction period.

Tony Retaskie, executive director of the Upper Peninsula Construction Council, said he expects about 2 million work-hours will be needed during this year's construction season.

That's about a 25 percent increase in the number of work-hours the region has averaged over the last few years.

The activity will no doubt generate a substantial amount of money in our local economy and provide a great deal of work and income for laborers.

We're all aware of Duke LifePoint's plan to build a new hospital along Baraga Avenue where the city's Municipal Service Center is situated.

Coupled with that \$170 million project, is the necessary relocation of the city's service center, which in turn has been budgeted at about \$18 million.

Northern Michigan University is also looking at beginning a project this summer for new housing and dining facilities on its campus. Preliminary discussions for that development have investments totaling around \$100 million.

Beyond that, plans have progressed for the redevelopment of one of Marquette's historic structures, the Holy Family Orphanage, which is set to be transformed into affordable housing for area residents. That effort is expected to cost about \$15 million.

Near the intersection of West Washington Street and Lincoln Avenue, a total \$35 million investment is nearing completion at the Liberty Way development site, which includes the completed mBank building, an extended stay hotel and a new office building for Upper Peninsula Health Plan.

The group at Founders Landing is continuing its work on the final phase of the Landing Condominiums, while ground is expected to be broken for a new parking structure and building featuring cafe, office and residential space, which will all cost about \$20 million.

Meanwhile, though budgeted at lower amounts, contractors and laborers will also be needed for work on the Clark Lambros Beach Park pavilion, as well as improvements to the city's Father Marquette Park, expected to cost \$981,000 and \$200,000, respectively.

Don't forget about the Marquette Board of Light and Power's plan to build a new electric generating facility near its office on Wright Street. That could cost roughly \$65 million.

"If you think about it, with all these, I don't think we've ever seen this many construction projects, large construction projects at one time in the city," Marquette City Manager Mike Angeli said in a recent Journal article.

Though this list may not include every single project to take place in the city, or the rest of Marquette County for that matter, it certainly shows the high level of investment in our community, and that's an encouraging thought for the future of the Upper Peninsula.

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