

Dept. of Transportation: TEA grant helps Bayfield County agriculture jobs

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 25, 2020

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Pavement and shoulder upgrades to make Bayfield County E an all-season road will allow the creation of 10 new jobs at White River Ag in Mason, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) announced today.

The recently completed \$153,000 project is funded in part by a \$70,000 Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) grant approved earlier this year by WisDOT Secretary-designee Craig Thompson.

“Thanks to our partnerships with Bayfield County and White River Ag, we accomplished a project that creates jobs in rural Wisconsin and strengthens part of our agricultural economy,” Secretary-designee Thompson said.

The upgrade to 1.3 miles of County E between US 63 and Nelson Road eliminates seasonal load limits, which had been a barrier to White River Ag’s expansion.

Bayfield County Administrator Mark Abeles-Allison said that “the company can now proceed with a planned expansion that will add new jobs and retain existing jobs in our county.”

Bayfield County District 11 Board Supervisor David Zepczyk expressed his appreciation for White River Ag and said that “this improvement will help maintain

and create new jobs in the years ahead.”

Completion of the improvement this fall means White River Ag will be able to continue business activities uninterrupted in the spring.

White River Ag, which was founded in 2011, includes a seed cleaning and packaging operation, straw storage facilities, a pellet mill factory and a retail store at their Mason location. The company plans to add a seed oil press next year which will allow it to extract cannabidiol (CBD) from hemp plants.

In 2020, Wisconsin’s TEA program has awarded nine grants totaling \$3.5 million to support transportation improvements linked to business development projects that will create 762 new jobs and retain an additional 19 jobs in Wisconsin.

The TEA program provides financial assistance to communities to support transportation infrastructure improvements that will help attract new employers or encourage existing employers to expand. A municipal or county unit of government must sponsor a TEA application. The project must have the local government’s endorsement, and it must benefit the public.