

Wetland project moves ahead

Webster Co. supervisors accept bid for Miller Marsh

By **JESSE HELLING**
Messenger staff writer

A long-planned wetland restoration project in north-eastern Webster County is scheduled for completion in July.

When finished, the more than 215-acre Miller Marsh will serve as a means to both improve water quality and increase the habitat available for water fowl and plants in the area.



Matt Cosgrove

One major component of the project will be to replace an 18-inch main through the area, said Matt Cosgrove, Webster County Conservation director.

Members of the Webster County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve a bid from Ubben Tiling and Backhoe of Stratford for the project.

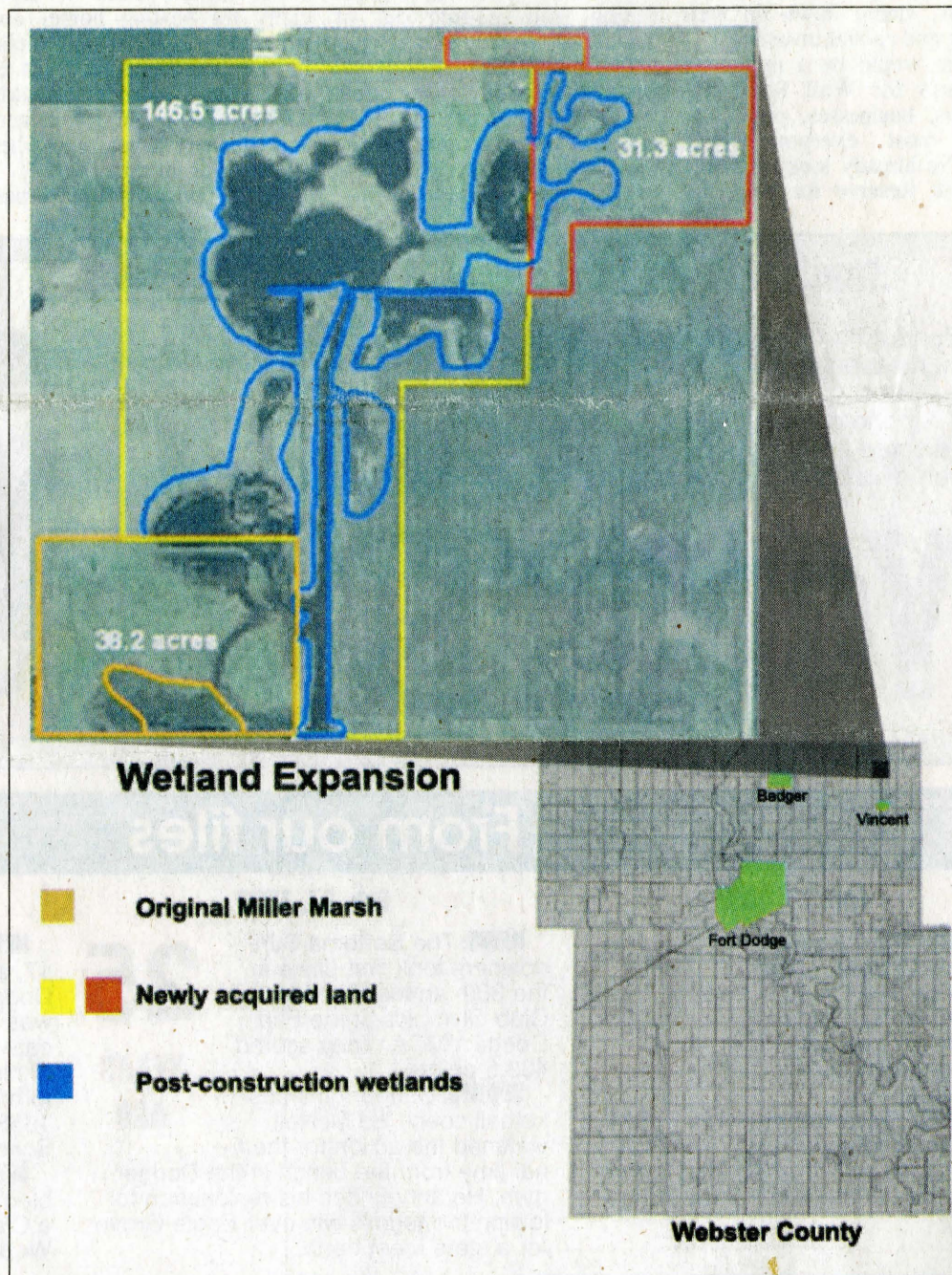
One of two bids submitted, Ubben came in at \$100,588.85. The second bid was submitted by Nels Pederson Co. Inc. of Badger for \$163,518.46.

"Our construction schedule is relatively short," Cosgrove said. This might have prevented other companies from submitting bids, he said.

When completed, Miller Marsh will "revert" to the original habitat of the area, comprising the wetland and prairie landscape that characterized Webster County before the advent of pioneer settlement.

Funding for the ongoing project is derived from several sources, including a Wildlife Habitat Grant from the state of Iowa. Webster County Conservation is providing money from a conservation trust fund.

A large share of the project's cost will be borne by the Iowa Department of Transportation. The IDOT funds were contributed to the project as it is seen as a means to help offset the environmental impact of ex-



-Messenger graphic

"We're hoping for some dry days."

—Matt Cosgrove
Webster County Conservation director

panding U.S. Highway 20 to a four-lane expressway.

The IDOT's involvement is what prompts the July deadline, Cosgrove said.

Construction will begin as soon as weather conditions

permit, he said.

"We're hoping for some dry days," he said.

Initially a 38-acre wetland, the Miller Marsh expansion will include land acquired by Webster County

about a year ago from three adjoining property owners.

The expansion makes Miller Marsh, located north of Vincent off of Webster County Road C56, the third-largest county-owned wildlife area, behind John F. Kennedy Memorial Park and the Bob Hay Memorial Conservation Area.

The initial portion of Miller Marsh was purchased in 2003.

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