

Mebane City Beat: Lake Michael's temporary closure

BY KELLY HUNTER
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS OF ORANGE

Scenic parks promoting a happy and healthy lifestyle are one of the key backbones to ensuring the City of Mebane remains a positively charming place for its community. Did you know that Mebane offers over 350 acres of recreational leisure in its nine beautiful parks for residents to enjoy, including 12 ball fields, nine tennis courts, five playgrounds, and over four miles of trails and multi-use paths? As the City continues to grow, city officials must focus on our parks' infrastructure and ensure these amenities and parks stay in top working condition so all can enjoy them for decades to come. That is why one of the City's most beloved outdoor facilities, Lake Michael Park, will close to the public on September 9, 2024.

Lake Michael Park, located at 7300 Lebanon Road, features a 60-acre lake with a dam and spillway constructed in 1952. The current spillway needs significant improvements due to several vital components warranting repair or replacement due to concrete deterioration and undermining. These spillway deficiencies are common for dams built during the 1950s era, so to ensure our residents' safety and the future enjoyment of Lake Michael, the spillway will be replaced and constructed to current design standards. The City awarded the bid for the project to Thalle Construction Company from Hillsborough, North Carolina. The Lake Michael Dam Spillway Replacement Project will cost \$7,559,500, financed with an installment loan of \$7,255,000, with \$304,500 paid in cash.

The closure of the park in its entirety will start in September and last roughly one year. Work will officially begin in October 2024. Before the contractor, Thalle Construction Company, can mobilize on-site, an overhead power line must be buried underground. "We understand the disappointment to those who make regular stops at Lake Michael for fishing, hiking, walking, and use of all other amenities. Unfortunately, there is work that needs to be completed at the park in preparation for the closure and to prepare for the contrac-



CITY OF MEBANE

Mebane's Lake Michael Park will close its gates for the next year as much-needed improvements are made to its spillway, which was constructed in 1952.

tors to arrive," stated Recreation and Parks Director Aaron Davis.

Over the next year, the work at Lake Michael will occur during regular business hours, starting no earlier than 7 a.m. and ending each day by 6 p.m. with no weekend or holiday work. The project will consist of demolishing the existing concrete spillway and constructing a new concrete chute spillway. The replacement concrete spillway will be built at approximately the same location as the existing spillway. The Lake Michael Dam Spillway Replacement Project will include various dam safety improvements, such as the construction of a replacement toe drain system used to capture seepage and direct it away from the structure, a downstream toe berm, a sand filter diaphragm, and a high-density polyethylene (HDPE) slipline for the lake drain pipe. An HDPE slipline is a technique that involves inserting lengths of high-density polyethylene pipe into an existing pipe structure to repair leaks or restore structural stability. The project will also include a new gate valve and trash racks for the intake tower to protect against debris entering and clogging the intake

tower or spillway. While all dams need to be inspected and maintained for the duration of their use, with the proper maintenance and inspections by qualified personnel, the nature of the Lake Michael Dam Spillway Project will give the dam 50 to 75 more years of operational life.

During the construction of this project, the lake's water level will be significantly lower, but a coffer dam will be installed so as not to impact the wildlife that lives and thrives at Lake Michael. A coffer dam is a temporary water retaining structure designed by a professional engineer to protect the work area from base and storm flows. The dam will allow a small pool of water to be maintained to provide a fish habitat. In the case of an emergency, a construction emergency action plan is in place to address flooding or other problematic circumstances related to the potential uncontrolled release of the reservoir.

The public, including all citizens, will not be allowed to use the lake, playgrounds, trails, or other amenities out of an abundance of caution and safety for Lake Michael's patrons. While the majority of the work to

the spillway will take place at the entrance of Lake Michael Park, many large trucks and vehicles will make their way in and out of the construction zone daily. The contractors will use the parking lot areas for staging and material laydown, otherwise known as the storing of heavy machinery and equipment. Mebane Recreation and Parks Leaders, the Mebane Police Department, and other city officials will monitor the park to ensure no one is trespassing. Please note any individuals found on the property during the closure will be cited for trespassing.

When the park reopens in 2025, the public will notice the new concrete dam and spillway and that the power lines over Lake Michael's entryway have been moved underground. No further enhancements are currently planned for the lake, but there will be discussions among Mebane city leaders for future improvement projects. The City of Mebane appreciates the community's understanding and support as they make these critical upgrades to ensure that Lake Michael Park will be around for many generations.

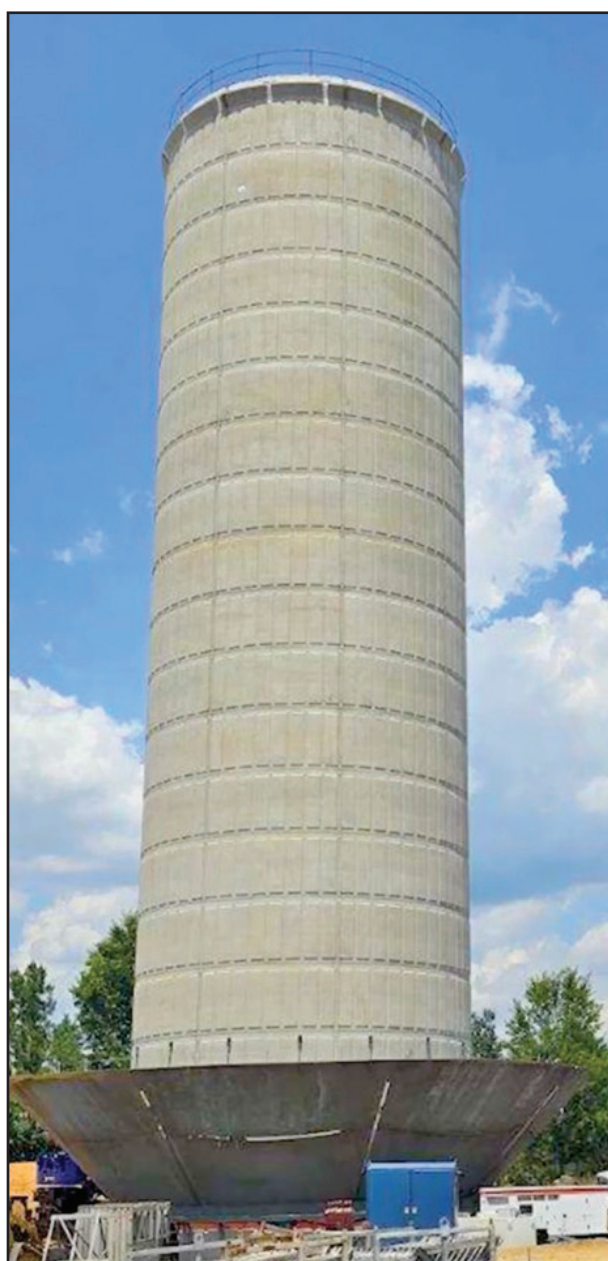
TOWER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tifying an engineer who could provide consulting services on the types of lighting that would be appropriate, and what types of logistics and additional infrastructure will be needed to install the uplighting.

With approximately \$150,000 in unspent contingency funds on the project, the town saw an opportunity to spruce up the new elevated water tower, providing opportunities for the city to have themed lighting for certain times of year, as well as for special moments such as state championships or other notable situations.

"You can change these lights, like red, white and blue on July 4. If Eastern Alamance wins the state championship, (they could) light it green and gold," said City Council member Tim Bradley.



CITY OF MEBANE

At the August 5 session of the Mebane City Council, the elected board unanimously approved a motion to allocate between \$25,000 and \$45,000 for engineering consulting work related to the installation of uplighting at the new city elevated water tower along S. Third Street. The elected board also agreed to spend between \$125,000 and \$160,000 to install the lighting.

Although there were some initial concerns on the part of some board members about the potential costs, the fact that the tower was under budget and funds were available - along with the unique opportunity to create a prized town attraction that could advertise the city - was too good of an opportunity for the City Council to pass up.

"At first, I was just a little concerned trying to be careful with the cost," said Council member Jonathan White. "But as I've driven by (the tower) and analyzed the height of it and visibility - the top isn't even on it yet - I think it's going to be an opportunity to advertise for Mebane on the interstate. And so that's moved me strongly in that direction (to vote in favor)."

Smith added to the City Council that the top the elevated tower will be installed in the coming weeks.

"What we're looking at it (with the installation of the water tower's top), it could possibly be as early as late August. It's going to depend on weather," Smith explained. "We still have a coating phase that we have to do before we (complete installation). So that will be going on soon. It (the completion of the top) won't - regardless what phase we're in - it won't be dependent upon the lighting."

Smith added that the town is planning to place a logo on the elevated water tower. Town staff has determined the water tower should be relatively north to south, with dimensions of 15 feet long by 35 feet high.

"We don't really want to bunch them up too close together," Smith said of the Mebane logos on the water tower. "So we'll try to get them sort of symmetrical on each side. That gives visibility at (interstate) 85 when it's north to south, at least on the overpass. It's going to depend upon the time of year."

Smith added that the sightline that provides the best visibility from the interstate is the overpass bridge along Highway 119 viewing from the north. From the south, the best vantage point will be crossing the bridge near Highway 70, South Fifth Street, and Highway 119.

"At South Fifth and 119 you'll be able to see a little bit of both sides of that logo at that location," Smith added.



INOGEN® PORTABLE OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS



Call us toll-free at
1-866-395-1418



*30-day risk-free trial - Return within 30 days of purchase for a full refund of purchase price.
 PMA230469 EN_EX_USA
 RA Only © 2024 Inogen, Inc.
 859 Ward Drive, Suite 200, Coleta, CA 93111
 Inogen® is a trademark of Inogen, Inc. The usage of any Inogen, Inc. trademark is strictly forbidden without the prior consent of Inogen, Inc. All other trademarks are trademarks of their respective owners or holders.