City: Park will be ready for

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SENECA — A half-million-dollar renovation project to Seneca's Norton-Thompson Park area will be completed by Memorial Day weekend, city officials said.

In 2009, Seneca was awarded a $515,000 stimulus grant to repave and improve the parking lot of Norton-Thompson Park to enhance the appearance of the park and its surrounding area.

"The grant work was done last year," said City Planning and Development Director Ed Halbig. "But the actual construction began in January."

He told the council the city would meets its self-imposed deadline of Memorial Day in order to have the area ready for SenecaFest that weekend.

Halbig said Seneca has used $450,000 to demolish old curbing and to repave the lot, adding grass islands and new lampposts. The islands in the parking lot are expected to provide additional activity space during city events, Halbig said.

Meanwhile, Depot Street, one of the main thoroughfares into Norton-Thompson, has also received a facelift thanks to the stimulus money. The sidewalk has been repaired, and handicapped access for pedestrians has been improved, Halbig said.

In 2007-2008, a transit center for the Clemson Area Transit buses was added adjacent to the park. The transit center, along with Norton-Thompson Park and the Depot Street improvements, are part of a larger plan to provide "better pedestrian access and parking improvement" for the city, Halbig said.

"We are going to have this done, with a caveat," Halbig said. "The work currently being done will be completed by Memorial Day, but we've obviously seen some areas where improvements can be made."

The city will move forward after SenecaFest to propose a new bidding process for a smaller supplemental project to the park using the remainder of the money. That will focus on the parking lot area and the transit center, where concrete wheel stops for the parking spots will be placed, along with handrails and handicap signage.

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SenecaFest



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Construction crews use machinery to dig up old pavement during renovation surrounding Norton-Thompson Park in downtown Seneca. The project is expected to be completed by Memorial Day weekend.