

New traffic lights offer safety

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Perkins' residents can enjoy the convenience and safety of new traffic lights at the busy intersection located at the eastern junction of U.S. 177 and S.H. 33 in Perkins. Construction began earlier this year on the signal lights, which were officially turned on Monday.

Included with the new set of lights was a crosswalk that will make crossing the highway easier and safer for pedestrian traffic.

"The new lights are going to be very nice due to the fact that it will allow pedestrians to cross safely from the north side of 33," said Perkins City Manager Jack Rosson. "They weren't going to originally put one in, it was an add-on once I got involved in the project."



The crosswalk will serve several purposes and benefit many different groups of people.

"We hope to have a walking trail in the future and this will give them a way to get across," Rosson said. "Plus, once the high school is built, there will undoubtedly be students needing to cross to get to school."

"They made the intersection a little wider and added an island, too. So pedestrians don't have to rush to get across the full length of the highway, they installed two separate lights for pedestrians to hit. One that gets them to the island and one from the island on. The island also provides some protection to pedestrians waiting to cross over and is wheelchair accessible."

The contract for the project was awarded on Dec. 7 to Traffic Signals, Inc. out of Edmond. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation awarded the contract in the amount of \$67,113. According to ODOT, the intersection that was formerly a four-way stop has approximately 9,600 vehicles pass through it each day.

For the most part the intersection is ready to go, although Rosson said the company taking care of the installation were going to come back out and paint new lines. These lines include the area in which they made turning lanes. The new turning lanes should also serve to cut down on potential accidents at the intersection, which never had any turning lanes going north.

"People will have to get used to the new lights, but it's always an adjustment when you change something," he said. "Basically, going from the stop sign to the signal lights is a step up and gets Perkins more in tune for the growth of the community."

To make the busy highway even safer for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic, the Perkins City Commission voted to make a request to ODOT to lower the current speed limit of 55 mph to 45 mph from Brush Creek Road west to US 177 North near Ampride at their July meeting. At the same time, they will also be requesting that this lowered speed will be reduced further to 35 mph in the school zone to provide a safer environment for students who will be attending the new high school in the fall of 2003.

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