



Gateway gets more funding

MDOT announces Battle Creek to receive \$142,040 federal grant

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The Cereal City is about \$142,000 closer to beautifying the southern entrance to its downtown area this spring.

The Michigan Department of Transportation on Monday announced it had granted more than \$5 million in federal Transportation Enhancement funding to eight counties in the state. Among the ornamental lighting and historic renovation projects granted funding, Calhoun County received \$142,040 to pay for 300 linear feet of steel mesh screening on which public art may be displayed.

The screen arches will be placed along 0.2 miles of I-194/M-66, also known as the Sojourner Truth Parkway, between the East Dickman Road overpass and East Hamblin Avenue.

Total cost of the gateway project is budgeted at \$355,100. In addition to the federal funding, the project includes a \$106,530 commitment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, \$71,020 from the Kellogg Co.'s 25-Year Employees Fund and \$35,510 from the Downtown Development Authority.

Karl Dehn, Battle Creek Unlimited president and chief executive officer, said the state funding allows this phase one gateway project to move forward this spring.

"This is the final piece," he said.

Phase two will include a complete streetscape redesign along Michigan Avenue and on side streets. That project features new lighting, new pavement and an events plaza or park space downtown.

Dehn said he hopes to see these phase two improvements installed this summer.

Streetscape improvements have been a key component in Battle Creek's multimillion dollar

downtown revitalization plan announced in November 2008.

At the time, the Kellogg Foundation said it would commit up to \$35 million for the revitalization. About \$2 million in public and private funds would go toward infrastructure improvements.

Dehn said he couldn't give a current estimate of the total cost of the streetscape improvements because, "Everything's moving right now."

The size and scope of phase two makes it ineligible for federal Transportation Enhancement funding, but Dehn said the city is looking at other state and federal funding sources.

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