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Margaret Levra/Daily Globe

A \$7.8 million sanitary sewer collection and transmission system project in the Powderhorn area is in full swing. On Friday, workers from Snow Country Contracting Inc., of Bessemer worked near the railroad grade on Black River Road, digging a trench for installation of a pressure main connection from Powderhorn to the treatment plant on Stone Road.

BPM area sewer project advancing

By MARGARET LEVRA
Globe Staff Writer

BESSEMER — The \$7.8 million sanitary sewer collection and transmission system in the Big Powderhorn Mountain area is moving along at a steady pace.

"The main ski lodge and some of the units on the north side of the railroad tracks will be hooked into

the system by October," said Powderhorn Area Utility District Administrator Jean Verbos.

The project was engineered by Wilcox Professional Services of Escanaba.

Construction by Snow Country Contracting of Bessemer at a cost of \$5,708,243 began on Dec. 1,

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with a cross-country transmission main, Verbos said.

The main transmission line extends from the treatment plant on Stone Road west into the Powderhorn area.

After the main transmission

line is in place, a main lift station will be constructed behind some of the businesses on Powderhorn Road, Verbos said. "We will continue to branch out from there, traveling through the remainder of the Powderhorn area."

Verbos said construction "will continue to move south, picking up all the subdivisions."

Contractors will not be working through the winter so the ski season will not be disrupted, Verbos said.

The project is scheduled for completion in October of 2006.

The Powderhorn area is located in both the Charter Township of Ironwood and Bessemer Township.

Under mandate by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to correct the problem of failed septic systems, the two entities came together and formed the PAUD, a municipal authority, in December 2001 to

construct a sanitary sewer collection and transmission system in the Powderhorn Ski Resort area, Verbos said.

Funding for the project consists of a \$1 million grant from the Clean Michigan Initiative Fund, \$385,000 hardship grant from the Michigan State Revolving Fund and the remainder of funding is a 40-year loan from USDA Rural Development.

The two townships set up a special assessment district to fund the preliminary expense of system design, administration and debt service until the system connects users and collects fees to support the operations.

Since this type of utility is a "user-based" system, all of the costs associated with construction, operation and debt service come from charges to the users of the system and not the general public.