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Work prepares lakes for summer boats

By Karen Madden
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ROME -- Repair work has begun on the upper Lake Camelot dam. Workers are installing a new, upgraded, drain system at the Kings Way dike, often referred to as a dam, said Jane Grabarski, Adams County Emergency Management director. They began Monday morning and should be completed within three weeks, depending on the weather.

Resident Ray Jelinek said rumors had been circulating through the community that the repairs wouldn't be complete until sometime in the fall, leaving concerns about the low water levels. Lake Camelot residents received the news work would be done in a few weeks during a meeting Saturday.

"They've brought in all kinds of machines," Jelinek said. "They've put in a road to get down there."

Besides installing a new drain system, workers will have to seal up the old system, Grabarski said. They also will seed the earthen bank.

Once work is complete, representatives from the state Department of Natural Resources will have to do an inspection, Grabarski said. When everything is approved, the water levels on the lakes can be brought back up.

Water on lakes Camelot and Sherwood were drawn down last year after officials became concerned during a dam inspection at the end of July, when a sinkhole was noted. Then, bubbles were spotted in the water near the Kings Way Dike. At that point, officials decided action was necessary.

The water level was drawn down lower than it has ever been, said Jelinek, whose home is on the channel. The low water level and springs kept the channel from freezing all winter.

Residents living around the lakes have worried that they weren't going to be able to put their boats in the water this year, Jelinek said. His own boat is in storage, but he hopes to get it in the lake soon.

Construction has not closed Kings Way, Grabarski said. The construction area is well marked, and residents are asked not to enter.

"It's a safety issue," she said.