Work starts Tuesday on St. Joseph Street project

By Hugh O'Gara
Journal Staff Writer

Work begins Tuesday on the second major Rapid City road construction project, the 20-block, $6.8 million St. Joseph Street project.

The contractor, Heavy Construction Inc., also built the soon-to-be-completed Main Street construction project. The company plans to begin work on Second Street between Main and St. Joseph streets and then move on to St. Joseph Street between First and Third streets about Sept. 22.

The next phase will be in two sections. Work will be done on St. Joseph between Third and Fourth streets and from First Street to East Boulevard near the Rapid City Post Office. The contractor hopes to begin that phase by Oct. 25 and be completed by Christmas.

After that phase, work will move steadily west — block by block — toward West Boulevard, where the project ends.

After Thanksgiving, work will halt in the downtown section of the project to allow access to holiday shoppers.

By May 1, 1983, plans call for construction work to be completed downtown to Mount Rushmore.

The Mount Rushmore Road intersection — and the Fifth and St. Joseph Street intersection — will be kept open for north-south traffic during repair work, but they will be narrowed to one lane going either direction.

After the Sturgis Rally & Races and the Central States Fair in early August, work will resume in the 800 and 900 blocks of St. Joseph Street.

The entire project will run from West Boulevard to Steele Avenue, adjacent to South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

City officials on Thursday told business owners along St. Joseph Street to expect construction to take four to six weeks per block. As the project moves from block to block, city officials will notify business owners what to expect.

As on the Main Street project, which should be completed in six weeks, access to stores will be open to foot traffic while the road is closed for construction.

Although the St. Joseph Street reconstruction project is twice as long as the Main Street project because of the expansion to Steele Avenue, officials hope to have it completed in 16 months compared with the 13 months of construction during the Main Street project.

Public information meetings will be held bimonthly throughout the project to keep people informed on the project's status. They will be at 5:30 p.m. each Monday, starting Sept. 21, at the City-School Administration Center, 300 Sixth St.