John Winter sent the following information and photos he took over this past weekend. This morning at Clifford Street in Plymouth equipment and workers are now gathering. A few minutes ago they started to install silt fencing. So the project is now officially underway. Clifford Street is the designated start point. Jerry Thompson

Time for the weekly update. They are busy as bees at several points along the line. I don't know how many workers they have assigned to the entire project, but they have several individual projects going on at the same time. The bridge over the creek west of Co. Hwy. M is probably getting the most attention. This week I see they have the west bridge abutment in place and two pillar bridge supports. I also saw the other bridge abutment for the east approach laying next to the road at Hwy. M waiting to be put in place. It is stamped with info including the weight of 32,000 lbs.!!! The first 3 photos show the progress being made so you can compare along with 2 photos of the abutment. A new area of work has begun and that is the bridge over the Sheboygan River by downtown Sheboygan Falls. They have scaffolding hanging under the bridge for the workers. Not sure exactly what they are doing, but obviously doing repairs to the support structure under the bridge. In the photos you can see the scaffolding under the bridge along with a hi-rail crane on top.

The work on the bridge over the Mullet River along Hwy. TT seems to have slowed down. I don't see any obvious changes there. They continue to install culvert pipes at various locations. I also see some grading going on as it would appear they are leveling the right-of-way to be prepared when they start laying sub-road bed and eventually ties & rails. Its been chilly outside, but this stretch of dry weather has helped move things along. But there are still some very soft spots which I found when one of my hiking boots sunk into the mud up to my ankle. The hazards of exploring. :)

John Winter
March 24, 2015

The day began with construction folks showing up on Clifford Street in Plymouth at 7am today. They started to install silt fencing. Not a job I would want when you are looking at 11 miles, and both sides of the track for a total of 22 miles to install! Then at 3pm the official shovels and a crowd of about 80 interested people showed up for the Ground Breaking Ceremony. Political leaders and industry representatives spoke and then we adjourned into the Depot Restaurant for refreshments. A very nice turn out on a raw spring day. It has been many years since this old C&NW railroad depot, built in 1912, has seen this many people at this site interested in railroads. Let the construction begin! It has been a long 8 years to get to this stage of the project.
March 26, 2015

This morning the bulldozers are on the move! It was February 26, 2015 when equipment arrived in Plymouth and the first culverts were installed. Now it is March 26 and soil is on the move at the Clifford Street Site in Plymouth. Two bulldozers at work, grading the railroad roadbed and prepping the area for a materials staging area. Trees are coming down and a new driveway is being prepped on land owned by the Plymouth Industrial Development Corp. just south of Clifford Street. The contractors have permission to use this area for staging and materials storage.

All around the right-of-way from Plymouth to Kohler there is construction activity. Only bridge not being worked on at this time is the one on the extreme east end of the line, in Kohler, WI.

Jerry Thompson
Listed below are information and a couple of photos provided by John Winter, updating us regarding the Construction Project. The comments in "blue" are mine, which should help to clarify what is taking place.

Howdy Railfans;

Progress is steady but nothing spectacular happened this week. There was a special event in Plymouth when they had the official ground breaking ceremony on Tuesday, March 27 attended by numerous local, county and state officials. So I guess we can say this project has its official blessing from the officials themselves. Attached is a photo from the event taken by the CNW Depot Restaurant by Jerry Thompson.

Sheboygan Falls: They brought in a larger crane for the bridge over the Sheboygan River. They are removing the decking on the bridge and had about 1/3 of it off. I don’t know how far down they will strip this bridge before rebuilding it. The bridge is to be completely reconstructed, using existing main steel girders and abutments. All rivets are to be mechanically removed and replaced with bolts. Abutments will be completely stripped of aging concrete or substandard materials and re-built or resurfaced. New deck will be installed. The bridge west of county highway M: They continue to put in bridge abutments & supports. I’m waiting for when they have the steel I-beam spans in place, and then it will be time for another photo update.

Staging Areas: Something new but not too exciting, but worth mentioning. There are two staging areas in Plymouth. Construction project will also be using a third area in Plymouth, which is at the current RR Depot site. They basically built two flat areas with a gravel/sand mix. My guess is these places will be used to store ties, spikes, tie plates and anything else they’ll need when they start laying rail. I took a photo of both locations. The first area by Highland St. & Valley Rd. is the biggest area and already had a pile of tie plates on it, although my guess is they’ll need a lot more. The second area is by Clifford St. & Egan St. Only parked equipment is here now, but you can see on the left of the photo how the right-of-way has been leveled. With a project about 11 miles long, I’m sure they’ll need more staging areas for material at various locations along the right-of-way. They are considering two more sites in Sheboygan Falls, but I do not know at this time what area(s) have been secured for staging.

There will be some 33,000 ties arriving, plus 22 miles of 115# rail, along with tie plates, spikes, rail joiners and switch components. Also arriving will be materials to construct the 36 road crossings to be installed.

Enjoy the week.

John