

\$13.4 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Gonzales County

Funds to improve drainage and sewer infrastructure, emergency communication approved for Gonzales County, Cities of Gonzales and Nixon

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst, County Judge Patrick C. Davis and Gonzales Mayor Connie L. Kacir announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved more than \$13.4 million in flood mitigation projects to improve drainage and sewer infrastructure and emergency communication in Gonzales County and the cities of Gonzales and Nixon. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that have faced repetitive storm damage in 2015 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey.

“In recent years Texas has led the nation in disaster declarations,” said Commissioner Bush. “The need for flood mitigation, effective emergency response, and effective water treatment facilities has increased across our state, and especially in coastal counties. Many communities have struggled to get the funding needed to keep up with the demand. The historic funding we’re awarding today will go directly to projects in Gonzales County that will help strengthen the capabilities of emergency response teams and fortify homes, businesses and critical infrastructure against future disasters for generations.”

“During Hurricane Harvey, waters more than 11 feet above flood stage roared through our county, destroying property, putting lives at risk and closing our major roadways,” said Patrick C. Davis, Gonzales County Judge. “The \$13.4 million in funding being awarded today by Commissioner Bush and the GLO will help move floodwaters away from communities, upgrade our aging sewer lines, ensure access to flooded areas by first responders, and significantly help us improve our fire protection and emergency communications systems for faster response. This grant also helps address Gonzales County residents who receive rural water from the Gonzales County water supply. Adding generators to the Gonzales well sites will ensure everyone will have fresh water during power outages that can be caused by hurricanes or severe weather including ice storms like the one we just went through this February. Having clean fresh water is essential for our County residents.”

“I will never forget the call I received after 10:00 pm the night of the heavy rainfall during Hurricane Harvey,” said Gonzales Mayor Connie L. Kacir. “The city called to inform me the hydrostatic pressure from the heavy rains resulted in a major break in a section of sewer lines. This break resulted in an immediate danger of health and safety. The city’s infrastructure at the break point was estimated at approximately 90 years old. The infrastructure was well beyond physical obsolescence. City crews worked tirelessly through the night to temporarily repair the break. I did not sleep the rest of the aforementioned night as I continued to call in to check the status of the repair and know our citizens were safe. Following the storm, I requested a meeting with GLO representatives to determine if sewer line replacement and flood mitigation funding was available for these projects. The assistance and support of GLO funding for these projects is appreciated beyond what words can communicate. The City of Gonzales is blessed beyond measure to be awarded the grant monies to replace failing infrastructure. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported Gonzales being a GLO grant recipient!!”

Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) offered her support for the grant saying, “The damage done by floods and hurricanes in our area has been a major issue. That’s why I commend Commissioner Bush for recognizing our local needs and allocating these funds. This goes a long way to

solve real problems and is a great example of the federal, state and local governments working together."

In May 2020, Commissioner George P. Bush announced the [kick-off of the application process](#) for the first round of more than \$2.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect Texas communities hit by Hurricane Harvey and severe flooding in 2015 and 2016. During the first round, the GLO conducted three competitive application programs from the [CDBG-MIT Action Plan](#). Those programs include:

- 2015 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) \$31,426,781 to four grantees.
- 2016 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) 21 grantees with \$135,462,438.
- Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition Round 1 (\$1 billion of \$2,144,776,720 total).

Applications closed for the first round of funding October 28, 2020, and the GLO evaluated all 290 submitted applications in accordance with the HUD approved scoring criteria. Eligible applications with the highest scores were awarded funds. The second round of the competition will award the remaining \$1,144,776,720 in mitigation funding to Hurricane Harvey eligible entities.

HUD defines mitigation as activities that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters. HUD requires that at least 50% of total funds must be used for activities benefiting low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons.

The State of Texas CDBG Mitigation Action Plan: Building Stronger for a Resilient Future outlines the use of funds, programs, eligible applicants, and eligibility criteria as required by HUD. The plan was sent to HUD on February 3, 2020, after an extraordinary public outreach effort including a 50-day public comment period and eight regional public hearings, far-surpassing HUD requirements. HUD approved the plan March 31, 2020. For more information, please visit recovery.texas.gov/mitigation.

City of Gonzales: Tinsley Creek Flood Mitigation Project - \$3,778,467.00
LMI Percentage: 57.29%

During Hurricane Harvey, the portion of the Guadalupe River that runs through Gonzales was at Flood Stage 42.1 feet. Flood stage for the river is 31 feet. During heavy rainfall, flooding closes Highways 183, 97 and Farm to Market 108. The runoff down Tinsley Creek in Gonzales adds to the Guadalupe River backwater, which floods the lowest homes near the creek. Secondary roads and streets near the river are flooded and dangerous to motorists.

The project will increase the flow capacity of the Guadalupe River and Tinsley Creek. Improvements include:

- 1) Replace a low water crossing with 6 culverts at Johnson Street
- 2) Add 4 new culverts between Tinsley Creek and St. Andrew Street
- 3) Replace box culvert crossings with free span bridge crossings at St. Andrew Street, St. Lawrence Street, St. Louis Street, St. Matthew Street, St. Michael Street and St. Vincent Street. These free span bridges will allow Tinsley Creek to flow unimpeded through these crossings. A total of 1,010 LF.

Gonzales County: Fire Protection & Emergency Communications Project - \$6,071,588.57

LMI Percentage: 53.59%

The proposed improvements will provide better access to emergency personnel for low- and middle-class residents, more efficient and reliable access between emergency dispatchers in Smiley and Belmont to different areas of the county, more compatibility for multiple emergency response jurisdictions throughout the county and more efficient emergency personnel response times.

The design for Gonzales County is a trunked solution with a 4-Site, 4-Channel simulcast system. Each site will have four (4) VHF radio channels. One radio channel at each site is allocated to be the control channel. The remaining three radio channels are used for voice calls.

Gonzales Sheriff Office:

- 1) 2019.2 Master Site and the Simulcast Prime Site and a co-located RF site with a 4- channel P25 expandable site subsystem (ESS) for future growth and a new antenna assembly
- 2) Install a new 300 ft. Guyed Tower and update software and consoles

Belmont Site:

- 1) Simulcast remote RF site with a 4-channel trunked expandable site subsystem (ESS)
- 2) Install a new 12x10 MSB and a new 300 ft. Guyed Tower.

Waelder Site:

- 1) Simulcast remote RF site with a 4-channel trunked expandable site subsystem (ESS)

City of Nixon: Sanitary Sewer System Improvements Project - \$3,592,211.82

LMI Percentage: 52.37

The city of Nixon's sanitary sewer system has experienced heavy levels of inflow and infiltration during heavy rainfall events. As a result, various components of the city's system experience capacity issues that result in wastewater surcharges and inundation with the potential to negatively affect public welfare and the environment.

In addition, many of the city's sanitary sewer collection system lines are made of aged and failing clay. These lines have exceeded their useful life and are failing in a variety of ways including cracking, collapsing, joint separation and misalignment. The proposed project includes improvements to the sanitary sewer system that would reduce the potential for inflow and infiltration, which cause wastewater surcharges & inundation, increase conveyance capacity, and improve key system structures to better handle the impacts of significant rain events.

The six project objectives include:

- 1) Replace the existing sanitary sewer trunk main from the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) lift station east across State Highway 80, around the Nixon-Smiley ISD property and south to East 10th Street (4,055 LF of sewer line). Replacing the old clay main will reduce inflow and infiltration, increase wastewater conveyance, and reduce the potential of unauthorized discharges during flood events due to line surcharges.
- 2) Replace the existing sanitary sewer trunk main from just upstream of the wastewater treatment plant lift station south, roughly paralleling State Highway 80 (to the east), to and along West 3rd Street, then to and along West Holmes Street to North Rancho Road (7,760 LF of sewer line).

Replacing the old clay main will reduce inflow and infiltration, increase wastewater conveyance, and reduce the potential of unauthorized discharges during flood events due to line surcharges.

- 3) Renovate the WWTP lift station by converting the large dry well into a wet well and increasing the station's wall height, thereby increasing the stations storage capacity, and reducing risk of inundation. Submersible pumps will replace the suction pumps to increase firm pumping capacity.
- 4) Improve the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and install a generator to the WWTP. The SCADA system would allow city staff to better monitor and control the plant's operation remotely 24-hours a day. In the event of a power outage caused by high winds, wildfire, flooding, severe thunderstorms, or other significant events, the generator would insure uninterrupted operation of the WWTP and its lift station. Adding a generator to the WWTP would also bring the plant into compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).
- 5) Replace the existing 8th Avenue lift station and add remote monitoring/alarm capabilities. The new station will have increased storage and pumping capacity to mitigate the effects of inflow and infiltration into the wastewater. The increase reliability would mitigate the risk of unauthorized discharges during flood events due to line surcharges.
- 6) Pressure and supply to the Water Plant No 3 service area is supplied by booster pumps and is isolated from the elevated storage tanks which serve the rest of the city. Installing a generator to Water Plant No 3 would provide a minimum of 24-hours of continuous water supply and pressure to this service area. In addition, by opening valves between No 3's service area and the rest of the city, this plant could provide emergency supply throughout the city and the elevated storage tanks in the event of an extended outage.

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