GLO Awards $32 Million in Flood Mitigation Grants in Deep East Texas

DETCOG Broadband Grant for Northern Newton County Receives $9 Million

Lufkin, TX – Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced Thursday that the General Land Office (GLO) has approved more than $32 million for various projects in Deep East Texas in the second round of grant funding for the GLO's mitigation grant competitions. Among the projects approved is a rural broadband network to serve northern Newton County.

The grants coming to Deep East Texas include:

- $9,008,688 to the Deep East Texas Council of Governments for the DETCOG Broadband Project in Northern Newton County.

- $4,194,643 to Jasper County for the County Road 200 Flood Mitigation Project.

- $3,650,657 to Newton County for Bridge and Culvert Improvements in the Big Cow Creek and Caney Creek Watersheds.

- $3,960,000 to San Augustine County for the Countywide Storm Mitigation Safe Shelter Project.

- $4,457,650 to the City of Newton for Drainage and Sewer Improvements.

- $3,875,691 to the City of Tenaha for Water and Wastewater System Improvements.

- $3,600,000 to the City of Zavalla for Citywide Flood Mitigation.

"We are thrilled to learn that our grant application to construct a rural broadband network in northern Newton County has been approved," said DETCOG Executive Director Lonnie Hunt. This represents a significant step toward realizing our ultimate goal of ensuring every home and business in Deep East Texas has reliable and affordable broadband."

DETCOG is awaiting word on another larger grant application which if approved would enable the agency to construct a rural broadband network in all 12 of its member counties. Hunt said he remains optimistic about the grant application that is still pending, but it will likely be several more weeks before the winners are announced. In addition, DETCOG has a separate grant application pending to fund a regional interoperable radio communications system for law enforcement agencies and first responders throughout the region.

He cautioned that these are big projects which will take some time to complete. "Before we can proceed with anything on the broadband grant, we have to get a contract in place with the GLO,

which could take 45 to 60 days," he said. "Then additional engineering work and environmental assessments are required before any construction can begin. So, it's important for the residents of northern Newton County to know that broadband is coming -- but it will take some time."

"We will move as quickly as we can but will also take the time to make sure this project is done right. Since we began the DETCOG broadband initiative three years ago, we have sought out the best experts available to make sure we have a solid plan that will be successful. We already have our engineering and grants management teams in place and ready to start once we have a contract in place."

DETCOG has procured the national firm of Magellan Advisors as its engineer for the project. Traylor & Associates will administer and manage the grant. Traylor is based in Tyler and has done extensive work with counties and cities in Deep East Texas.

"Magellan and Gary Traylor have done a magnificent job to help us get to this point," Hunt noted. "Their experience will help, along with the support of the GLO, will ensure the success of this project. I'd be remiss without thanking Commissioner Bush and his team for all their support. GLO has been a great partner for DETCOG and our local communities and we look forward to working with them on this important rural broadband project."

Here is a link to the news release from the Texas General Land Office:

https://www.glo.texas.gov/the-glo/news/press-releases/2021/march/cmr-george-p-bush-texas-glo-awards-more-than-135-million-in-second-round-of-flood-mitigation-grants.html

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