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PRESS RELEASE

\$29.4 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Jasper County

Funds to improve roads and drainage infrastructure approved for Jasper County and the cities of Jasper and Kirbyville

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AUSTIN — Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush joined County Judge Mark Allen and several local elected officials in Jasper County to announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved \$29.4 million in flood mitigation projects to improve roads and drainage infrastructure in county, as well as the cities of Jasper and Kirbyville. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in a majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) area that have faced repetitive storm damage in 2015, 2016 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey. These funds are being granted in the same week that Jasper County residents experienced additional flood damage from recent rains.

“Texas unfortunately leads the nation in disaster declarations, and is especially prone to flooding in many areas,” said Commissioner Bush. “Jasper County experiences frequent, repetitive flooding that puts lives, homes, and livelihoods at risk. The flooding that has occurred this week underscores the reality faced by many communities in the region – drainage and flood mitigation is a financial burden to communities without access to vital infrastructure funding. The historic funding we’re announcing today will go directly to projects that will fortify homes, businesses and critical infrastructure across Jasper County against future disasters for generations.”

“Communities in Jasper County and throughout the surrounding areas have had a long-standing need for improvements to prevent flooding from severe storms, but until now we have not had the resources we need,” said County Judge Mark Allen. “Just this week I signed a disaster declaration because severe rainfall flooded several businesses and homes. Learning that Jasper County would be receiving nearly \$30 million for flood mitigation could not have come at a better time. I want to thank Commissioner George P. Bush and the GLO for recognizing the need for this funding in our communities and being our trusted partner in these efforts. This could not have been accomplished without Commissioner Bush’s compassion for Jasper County and Southeast Texas.”

Texas Senator Robert Nichols offered his support from the Texas Capitol saying, “It’s impossible to overstate how important these flood mitigation funds are to East and

Southeast Texas. Senate District 3 saw severe flooding during the 2015 floods, the 2016 floods, and again during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. These flooding events showed just how vulnerable this area of the state is and how necessary mitigation efforts are. Senate District 3 won over \$105 million in the competitive flood mitigation fund award process because the projects in our region are vital to protecting Texans from future flood events. I appreciate the professionalism of the GLO throughout this process and our local officials who worked so hard to make these projects a reality."

"The city of Jasper has recognized the need to improve drainage due to repetitive recovery efforts that follow flooding due to hurricanes, tropical storms, and riverine flooding," said Jasper Mayor Randy Sayers. "The projects moving forward thanks to this funding from GLO Commissioner George P. Bush will address flood mitigation, street hardening and drainage issues citywide, but especially in twenty-one of the most vulnerable areas where most of the residents are low-to moderate-income. These funds will go a long way to protecting residents and our economy from future storms."

"The people of Kirbyville are no strangers to repetitive regional flooding," said Kirbyville Mayor Frank George. "This flood mitigation project will be vital to protecting homes, businesses, and other at-risk structures. We want to thank Commissioner Bush and the GLO for funding these efforts, which will benefit our communities for years to come."

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 Jasper: Citywide Street and Drainage Improvements Project - \$11,258,023.51

LMI Percentage: 57.86%

The city of Jasper has recognized the need to mitigate flooding from past hurricanes/ tropical storms/tropical depressions and riverine flooding. The City of Jasper's proposed project addresses flood mitigation, street hardening and drainage issues citywide by focusing on the twenty-one (21) most vulnerable specific sites that will significantly impact flooding, drainage, and street conditions throughout the city. The improvements are all interconnected and function to reduce damage to streets when floods do occur. The project includes street improvements, culverts, and the addition of curb and gutters.

- 23,800 LF of street improvements throughout the city
- 90 LF of concrete box culverts along the Upper Walnut Run and Lower Walnut Run Tributaries.

City of Kirbyville: Flood Mitigation Project - \$3,356,625

LMI Percentage: 64.59%

The city proposes to build a detention pond to mitigate flooding of Highway 96, South Elizabeth and MLK. Reducing the risk of flooding on Highway 96 will ensure there is a safe evacuation route not only for residents of the city, but also for areas south of Kirbyville. The project will also include outfall improvements to channels and drainage culverts for the Herndon/MLK Ditch, Dole Bean Ditch, Railroad Crossing and East Drew Street Outfall. These improvements will increase capacity, make structures resistant to erosion and retain a higher strength during and after a storm event, reducing flooding within the most populated areas throughout the city.

- Kirbyville Detention Pond: Acquire 8 acres of land and construct an approximate 64-acre foot detention pond.
- East Drew Street Outfall: Clean and clear vegetation and debris along ditch. Regrade and concrete line 600 LF of ditch.
- Drew Street Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at Drew Street Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- Trout Street Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at Trout Street Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls
- Dole Bean Crossing: Clean and clear vegetation and debris and regrade along 350 LF of ditch.
- Herndon/MLK Ditch: Clean and clear vegetation and debris and regrade along 2,800 LF. Install concrete rip-rap along ditch.
- West Levert Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at West Levert Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- South Vallie Avenue Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at South Vallie Avenue Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- West Martin Luther King Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at West Martin Luther King Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.

- East Lavielle Street Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at East Lavielle Street Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- South Herdon Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at South Herdon Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- West Main Street Crossing: Remove existing drainage structures at West Main Street Crossing. Construct upgraded culvert crossing and upstream and downstream headwalls.
- Railroad Crossing: Tunneling at railroad and regrade ditches.

Jasper County: Drainage and Flood Mitigation Project - \$14,807,627.98

LMI Percentage: 58.13%

Since Hurricane Rita in 2005 and subsequent storms and flooding events following Hurricane Harvey, Jasper County has recognized the need to mitigate flooding from hurricanes/tropical storms/tropical depressions and riverine flooding. This project provides for drainage improvements from north of the city of Jasper to the Buna area, including three (3) storm water detention basins and fourteen (14) drainage structures to mitigate flooding in the Jasper, Kirbyville and Buna areas along the Hwy 96 corridor. The improvements are all interconnected and function to reduce flooding.

This project is a continuation of drainage improvements such as:

- Bridges
- Large storm water detention basins
- Concrete box culverts
- Road hardening
- Culvert upsizing and
- Other drainage improvements