

# **\$23.5 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in DeWitt County**

*Funds to improve wastewater and water infrastructure approved for the cities of Cuero, Yoakum and Yorktown*

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, Texas State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst and Mayors Sara Post-Meyer, Carl O'Neill and Bill B. Baker announce the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved \$23.5 million in flood mitigation projects to improve wastewater and water infrastructure in DeWitt County and the cities of Cuero, Yoakum and Yorktown. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit thousands of residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that faced repetitive storm damage in 2015 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey.

"Many of our communities across Texas have been in need of new infrastructure for many years or even decades," said Commissioner Bush. "Infrastructure that is lacking structural integrity can be very dangerous, especially during dangerous storm events like hurricanes. Because we know the next storm is always around the corner, the GLO is proud to help communities like those in Dewitt County to protect their residents in the immediate future, and for generations to come."

"These wastewater improvement projects have been on the City's drawing board for several years, and now with this grant funding, the projects can be initiated," said Sara Post-Meyer, mayor of Cuero. "3,400 of our citizens will benefit from this new water and sewer lines funding; generations to come will benefit from the water well work. The Cuero City Council greatly appreciates this needed grant from the GLO."

"The funds from the Texas General Land Office will strengthen several critical areas of the City of Yoakum infrastructure," said Carl O'Neill, mayor of Yoakum. "These projects will have such a positive impact on our community to assist with mitigating the destructive effects of the natural disasters that have affected our region over the last five years. The City of Yoakum is extremely grateful for the assistance from the Texas General Land Office. Without the funding assistance provided, these projects would fall short of the necessary enhancements to protect our ability to serve our citizens during any future disaster."

"This is great news for the City of Yorktown," said Mayor Bill B. Baker of Yorktown. "Each and every day we deal with infrastructure issues related to our deteriorating wastewater infrastructure. These funds will contribute towards the alleviation of those issues, along with increasing our resiliency to withstand future sever weather events, for multiple generations of Yorktown citizens. The citizens of Yorktown offer our sincere thanks to Commissioner Bush and the Texas General Land Office for their consideration of our community."

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](http://recovery.texas.gov/mitigation).

*City of Cuero: Wastewater Improvements Project - \$4,286,994*

LMI Percentage: 59.66%

The French Street Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and various waterline improvements have been identified as critical projects for the target area. The French Street WWTP is a decommissioned water treatment plant that needs to be made operational, to provide a localized pressure source and water to the area. In addition, any damage to critical facilities would leave this area of the city without a dependable water supply during a disaster event. These improvement projects are needed to reduce the effects of future disasters on the area, to improve the resiliency and effectiveness of the system, and to better serve residents. This project will increase system reliability, improve the city's ability to isolate mains and complete necessary repairs, provide reliable fire protection and ensure fire flows can be achieved, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

- 1) Replace 17,025 LF of existing cast iron mains with PVC pipe and fire hydrants. Locations include Baker Street, French Street, Evers Street, W Morgan Avenue, Douglas Street, E South Railroad Street, Hutcheson Street, E Court House Street, T L Overture Street, Buchel Street, Kathryn, Keller Street, Nash Street, N Gazzie Street, St. Charles Street, Crain Street, Graham Street, and Schleicher Street.
- 2) French Street Water Treatment Plant Improvements - construct a new ground water well, rehabilitate the existing ground storage tank, install two (2) new high service pumps, and install one (1) new generator.

*City of Yoakum: Electrical System Upgrade Project - \$8,143,545.20*

LMI Percentage: 53.30%

The project will upgrade electrical system components which serve the entire city of Yoakum community. There are three project areas to address increased demand and loading:

1. Y260 Upgrades will be located in the northern portion of the city and involve replacing the primary conductor, damaged air break switches and wood poles.
2. Y180/Y270 Upgrades are specifically around the downtown area and involve replacing the primary conductor, service drops, wood poles, damaged capacitor banks, and disconnects/cutouts.
3. Y170 upgrades will be located in the eastern portion of the city and involve replacing the primary conductor, damaged air break switches, service drops, wood poles, damaged capacitor banks, and disconnects/cutouts.

*City of Yoakum: Water System Improvements Project - \$4,960,187.10*

LMI Percentage: 53.30

The Yoakum Street Tank is nearly 100 years old, and its structural integrity is questionable such that the city cannot use it during stormy and high wind events, including during hurricanes. During these events, the tank must be filled to capacity to ensure it is at maximum weight, preventing the tank from being pulled from its foundation. For full capacity, the tank must be shut off from the city's water distribution system, so water usage does not reduce the capacity and make it vulnerable to damage from the storm events. The community is detrimentally affected by this operation due to low water pressure within the distribution system, jeopardizing fire-fighting capabilities because water flow/pressure would be significantly reduced in certain areas with the tank out of service. Insufficient water flow/pressure may not allow fires to be effectively extinguished, leading to additional structure damage.

A new replacement storage tank would be structurally sound such that it would remain in service during all-weather events and provide effective water flow and pressure within the distribution system, including that needed for fire protection. These new facilities would enhance the city's water supply, storage, flow, and pressure by providing increased elevated storage capacity, increased water transportation by replacing very old mains, and increased water production by the construction of a new well, therefore minimizing future maintenance needs.

The project will include:

1. Replacement of the water tank at the end of Yoakum Street to increase tank capacity from 250,000 gallons to 500,000 gallons and provide the city with enhanced fire flow protection by increasing the available elevated storage volume, estimated at 3.5 additional hours of fire flow capacity.
2. Replacement of the water main including burying 5,750 linear feet (LF) of pipeline laid along Arnold and Pruitt Streets from the water tank before joining another water main line heading East along Hopkins Street starting at Irvine Street, under the railroad tracks and then along Waco Street and Price Street before terminating at Schrimsher Street.
3. Improvements for the water main would include related facilities such as fire hydrants, customer service connections and in-line isolation valves.

*City of Yorktown: Wastewater Treatment Plant Project - \$6,183,237*

Percent Beneficiaries: 58.61%

The city of Yorktown's existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) was built in 1975. All components are past their useful life. The existing structures and lift stations allow the infiltration and inflow of stormwater into the wastewater system which results in flows and levels of metals, organic compounds, fecal coliform bacteria, and total suspended solids that exceed permit limits in times of heavy rainfall or flood events. These conditions also cause increased levels of grit and other pollutants which reduce the capacity of treatment processes.

The improvements will increase the resiliency of Yorktown's wastewater collection and treatment system to the identified risks.

- 1) Replace the existing WWTP with a new 0.26 – 0.3 MGD extended aeration treatment plant at the current WWTP site.
- 2) Create a new all-weather WWTP access road with improved drainage to provide emergency use.
- 3) Elevate several treatment components and containment systems to withstand inundation from flooding and increased flows from storm events.
- 4) Improve lift stations at the 11<sup>th</sup> Street and the 8<sup>th</sup> Street to include new wet wells that will be properly sized for increased storage. Emergency generators will be provided at each lift station.

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