

State, federal grants fund local drainage projects

Jefferson County Drainage District No. 6 (DD6) is utilizing millions of dollars in federal and state grants to fund numerous drainage projects throughout their jurisdiction in Southeast Texas.

At a board meeting Oct. 13, DD6 General Manager Dr. Joe Majdalani and others on the DD6 team outlined several grant-funded projects, discussed new drainage and flood mitigation grant applications in the works and broke down the many maintenance tasks the district performs throughout the area.

Since 2003, the district has successfully been awarded federal grants for 50 projects totaling over \$134,600,000, reports District Engineer Doug Canant, and is currently taking steps to mitigate the threat of flooding due to severe weather after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey and Tropical Storm Imelda.

“The district has filed and is filing state and federal grants to fund future significant drainage projects,” said Canant. “The district has recently been awarded \$17 million to fund more drainage projects. An additional \$4 million was recently awarded to Jefferson County to be used for Drainage District No. 6 drainage projects. There is an additional \$370,000,000 in flood improvement projects that the district will be filing grant applications for this month.

“These grants enable the district to do large drainage projects without raising taxes. In fact, this is only an example of the most im-

mediate capital projects to be funded through state and federal grant funds. The district will continue to utilize all available state and federal funds to supplement its tax revenue to allow the district to achieve these necessary drainage projects that will minimize the risk of flooding in our community.”

DD6 Project Manager Nelson Nixon said his maintenance crews diligently perform their scheduled tasks and, in some areas, are exceeding annual mowing expectations. Among other duties with which his staff is charged, the maintenance crew must often pursue right-of-way permissions to maintain ditches and other features on private properties. In spite of the challenges, Nixon said his crew is up to the task.

“Our systematic approach to the district’s Channel Maintenance Program is working well,” Nixon described. “We are starting to see the benefits. In fact, during the most recent rain events that have occurred, the system performed very well. I am proud to say, at this time, we have no outstanding complaints from citizens regarding maintenance concerns of the district’s facilities.”

Nixon said the district recently acquired a new piece of equipment that allows the team to mow in areas previously

inaccessible, like old lake beds too muddy to drive through with normal lawn tractors or other vehicles. The Marsh Master Amphibious Marsh Buggy is light enough to travel on swampy terrain that would bog down heavier machines, explained Nixon.

Dr. Majdalani said he is committed to improving the infrastructure in the district and to providing the DD6 team the means to get the job done, including seeking out and applying for the additional funding that allows for many vital Southeast Texas projects.

“It is my job to provide the tools and vision to the district board of directors and employees to best reduce the risk of flooding in our community. My approach is to study the district’s needs, design and plan an approach, assist in the execution of the projects needed by the district and follow up by measuring the efficiency of the district’s work. It is my goal to always approach the district’s needs with the most timely and cost-effective measures.”

To learn more about DD6 and the services they provide the public, visit the website at www.dd6.org.

— Sharon Brooks

