

Feds fund various Avoyelles projects

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The Town Talk

Improved sidewalks in Mansura and first-responder service in Hessmer are coming, courtesy of USDA Rural Development funds.

Congressman Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, and USDA Rural Development State Director Clyde Holloway were in Avoyelles Parish on Monday to present the federal grant funding for both community projects in separate presentations.

Contacted by phone Monday prior to the presentation at Mansura Town Hall, Alexander said a \$150,690 USDA Rural Development check was to be presented for Mansura to construct and renovate community side-

walks, which was matched by the city with \$30,000 in funds.

Later, a presentation was set at the Hessmer Fire Station where Alexander said the USDA Rural Development check for an emergency-response vehicle would amount to \$25,900.

"It's just extremely important to the rural areas," Alexander said, adding, "The USDA does an outstanding job."

So many of these rural communities do not have the means to provide for such projects, Alexander said.

"Anything they can do with federal money helps in the long run to keep these communities going," Alexander said.

Mansura Mayor Kenneth Pickett Sr. said, "The sidewalk project will be a big face-lift for the community of Mansura."

Pickett said accessibility would be improved for the town as well as for the disabled as the sidewalks will be handicapped-accessible "in the areas we're repairing."

Pickett said the streets benefiting from the project will be Main Street, Legisle Street and Nothofer Street, which is where two senior citizen apartments are located.

Pickett thanked Alexander and Holloway "for their support and endorsement, for the past, present and future projects they have endorsed for us."

Efforts to reach Hessmer officials for comment Monday were unsuccessful.

Both Alexander and Holloway also plan to present USDA Rural Development funds to upgrade Harrisonburg's sewer system at 11 a.m. today in the

Police Jury room in the Catahoula Parish Courthouse.

Also, U.S. Sen. David Vitter announced Monday that \$600,000 has been awarded to the town of Cottonport in Avoyelles Parish for infrastructure improvements.

The funds were awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, according to a news release from Vitter's office.

"Cottonport's tire recycling facility uses a thermal conversion technology to recycle tires into high value oil, gas, carbon and steel," Vitter states in the release. "This federal funding will help improve water, rail spurs and access roads for an industrial park and the nearby port."