

Montesano Mayor thanks Flood Authority for support

Local News

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MONTESANO, Wash. - Montesano Mayor Ken Estes released a big thank you to members of the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority this week. He added that the city plans to stay involved until every member has a solution to flooding on the Chehalis River. The Flood Authority earlier this week [voted to shift funding from three other Grays Harbor County projects](#), in order to fully fund and complete the [Mary's River Lumber project in South Montesano](#). Estes said in his release that the city also plans to stick around for the duration of the process to create a basin wide approach to reduce flood damage when the Chehalis River swells. Other communities in Lewis, Thurston and Grays Harbor put the interests of Montesano at the head of the line now. We won't forget. Our community is committed to stay involved until we have finished all of the needed local projects and found a basin wide solution to catastrophic flooding. - Estes

The following editorial was submitted by Montesano Mayor Ken Estes. In Montesano we're used to trying to solve our own problems. But year by year as the Chehalis River has eroded land and moved closer and closer to our wastewater treatment plant and Mary's River lumber company we realized this problem was bigger than we could handle alone. Locally we worked hard to come up with a workable solution to stop the erosion and protect the infrastructure that supports our community. However, the project cost is beyond the capacity of the city to fund. The Chehalis Basin Flood Authority supported our request for state funding. Our local legislators and both Governor Gregoire and now Governor Inslee, as well as the Chehalis Tribe, worked hard to see that the entire Chehalis basin funding package was adopted including the Montesano project.

We had given the legislature our best estimate as to the cost of the project to protect our facilities. As sometimes happens, once we have more details we found the project will cost more than the original estimate and we now know it will cost approximately \$6M because of length of the shoreline threatened by the river and expense of driving metal sheet pile to prevent major erosion in a big flood.

The rest of this story is an amazing example of people working together for the great good of the communities across the Chehalis River Basin. The legislature had provided funding for many local projects. The difference was that our project is permitted and ready to start and we have been praying that we can get the project started before the flood season which is now only three months away. Cosmopolis Mayor Vickie Raines, who is also chair of the Flood Authority, and Grays Harbor Commissioner Wes Cormier really stepped up and showed leadership. They volunteered to move funds designated the Mill Creek dam repair, Satsop floodplain restoration project and Wishkah road project to our project now. The Flood Authority members agreed. This was made possible also due to the strong support of our local legislators Senator Hargrove, Representatives Blake and Tharinger who committed to get the funds to complete the other three projects in the next legislative session. The fact is that our project was ready to start while those projects still need design and permitting work. This is a demonstration that local government representatives on the Flood Authority are clearly focused on a basin-wide approach to addressing the damage from floods and not just the

interests of their jurisdiction.

The problem of Chehalis basin flooding is bigger than just Montesano or Grays Harbor. I am proud to see a team mentality developing among the communities in the basin. Our local project is only one piece of the puzzle. We need a basin wide approach to reduce flood damage along with a dedicated program to enhance the natural resources of the basin.

Other communities in Lewis, Thurston and Grays Harbor put the interests of Montesano at the head of the line now. We won't forget. Our community is committed to stay involved until we have finished all of the needed local projects and found a basin wide solution to catastrophic flooding. After decades of frustration and failure when it comes to these issues, I am now an optimist that we have the leadership, the vision and the team to solve the big problems.

Ken Estes, Mayor

City of Montesano

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