

County, cities apply for flooding grants



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PANAMA CITY — Lynn Haven and Parker are planning to join forces with Bay County in an attempt to secure federal grants to help alleviate potential flooding damage.

The National Disaster Resiliency Competition Projects grants would cover five large projects. For the two cities, the grants would cover the most problematic areas in each municipality. In Lynn Haven, the grant would pay to pipe and cover the 17th Street ditch between Illinois Avenue and Colorado Avenue, which contributed to the major flooding July 4, 2013. The steep ditch also was the site of a fatal car accident in 2006. Lynn Haven has periodically worked on segments of the ditch spending \$220,000 in 2001-02, \$593,000 in 2009-10 and \$385,000 in 2012-13 with another \$425,000 budgeted for the ditch this year.

“The main thing is to keep drainage open.” Lynn Haven City Manager Joel Schubert said. “We get debris in there — big green trash cans — that block it.”

In Parker, Cheri Lane Apartments floods after nearly every heavy rain. The city has received \$1,013,476 from the Northwest Florida Water Management District to put a retention pond at the intersection of Arrow Street, Lake Drive, 11th Street and Lance Street and also install pipe ditches along 11th Street and Lake Drive. The city also is considering another proposal to purchase one portion of the Cheri Lane property. However, the national grant would pay to purchase and then demolish the entire apartment and townhome complex. Mayor Rich Musgrave said the city has received letters from 34 of the 36 property owners giving the go ahead to purchase the property.

“It’s almost uninhabitable,” Musgrave said.

Lynn Haven is requesting \$3,774,051 for the 17th Street ditch and Parker is requesting \$4 million to purchase, demolish and then build a retention pond where the Cheri Lane Apartments are now.

Bay County wants to replace three fire stations that flood: Northwest Side Fire Station at 2311 Michigan Ave. in Panama City, Hiland Park Fire Station and Southpart Fire Station — each with a slated cost of \$3.5 million.