

## Grant Helps Small Road to Handle Its Large Responsibility

**EVANGELINE PARISH, LA** – When the rains fell, the problems would started for drivers on Rixby Manual Road, a connecting street between two highways north of Ville Platte, the seat of this south-central Louisiana parish.

“The road was a mess in the past. There was always a lot of flooding,” said Doug Deville, the secretary-treasurer of the Evangeline Parish Police Jury. “Because there was so much traffic that accessed that road, when it flooded, it caused total chaos.”

After severe flooding damaged a 900-foot-long by 20-foot-wide section of the road’s 12-inch base in October and November 2006, Evangeline Parish officials applied for and received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant through the Public Assistance 406 Mitigation Program. Such funds, available following presidential disaster declarations, are used to promote life- and property-saving measures, protect infrastructure, and ultimately help build disaster-resistant communities.

The program assists state, tribal, and local governments and certain types of private, nonprofit organizations with projects in several categories, including improvements to roads that are damaged by disasters and need to be repaired, replaced, or restored.

FEMA pays 75 percent of the eligible costs of Public Assistance projects, while the state and/or applicant cover the remaining 25 percent. For the Rixby Manual Road project, FEMA provided \$101,475 of the \$135,300 total cost. Once FEMA provides the grant to a state, it is the state’s responsibility to manage the funds, which includes making disbursements to local jurisdictions and organizations that incurred costs.

The scope of work on Rixby Manual Road included the replacement of the damaged road base and the addition of a 24-inch corrugated polyethylene pipe and backfill to match the existing road elevation. In addition, concrete catch basins were installed every 100 feet to collect surface water during heavy rains or floods.

“During a meeting with the project officer it was suggested that the addition of a sub-surface drainage system would help to alleviate erosion, so that was added to the scope of work,” said City Engineer Justin Fontenot.

Sub-surface drainage systems are used when the drainage problem is mainly that of shallow water tables. Open ditches intercept groundwater and divert it.

Work on the project began in February 2007 and was completed 15 months later.

“I would just like to brag on the success of how well the project works,” Deville said. “It made all the difference in the world.”