



George County Board of Supervisors
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George County taking a shot at BP Restore Grant funds

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George County Supervisors are going to take their shot at the BP Restoration grant funding designated for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Board is scheduling a special meeting on Wednesday, July 24, to finalize application plans for the 2019 grant process.

The Board is considering using the Restore Grant funds towards the County's Highway 198 East Improvement Project. The 1,440+ ft. project calls for the highway to be widened with a center turn lane and an eastward merge lane to provide a new traffic entrance into the County's Industrial Park.

"The Restore Grant application is very clear," Supervisor Larry McDonald, Board President explains. "The state and the selection committee are looking for projects ready-to-go and they must have direct economic development benefits for the community and the region. Our application has all of those elements."

Last month, the County was awarded a \$1.4 million federal grant to cover 76 percent of the project's cost. These possible Restore Grant funds could cover most of the County's remaining costs.

The road project, and related grant, falls inside District One. Supervisor Fred Croom says the County has been working for months on site surveys, pre-engineering, and pre-permits in preparation for the grant requirements.

"This is the first time for George County and the entire Coast, to be given the opportunity to apply for this new grant. If the timing works out as scheduled, we could get these funds approved just as the road construction begins," Croom said.

The Restore Grant application process is managed by the Mississippi Development Authority. A specially appointed Advisory Board, along with the state legislature, will determine grant approval.

Altogether, \$30 million is allocated for the 2019 Gulf Coast Restoration Fund (GCRF). George, Stone, and Pearl River Counties were included in the official Mississippi Gulf Coast designation after months of debate.

County Supervisors have also begun substantial planning on the 2020 GCRF grant applications which are scheduled to open next summer.

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