

## **EDITORIAL**

### **BEXAR COUNTY CONTROLS FLOODING ON THE SOUTHSIDE**

**September 16, 2010**

Throughout the summer of 2010, Bexar County suffered extreme drought conditions. The lack of rainfall was so great, on August 24<sup>th</sup> during the Commissioners Court regular meeting, the Bexar County Fire Marshal, Ross Coleman advised the Court to activate an outdoor burn ban in an effort to promote safety. At that time, Bexar County did not receive rainfall for 20 days.

Just a few weeks later, Bexar County received much needed rainfall. Along with the rainfall poured concerns for safety in flood sensitive areas throughout the County. Media stories reported many accidents throughout the County. The tragedies reminded me of Gloria Gibson whose vehicle was swept away on May 2, 2007 as she attempted to travel along a flooded area on Shepherd Road in South Bexar County. At that moment, I knew as County Commissioner over the Shepherd Road area that I really needed to do something. Shepherd Road has always been known to experience dangerous flooding that limits the ability of residents, vehicles, buses, and even emergency first responders to safely travel during major rain conditions. After much hard work from Art Villarreal, the County's Flood Control Projects Manager, my colleagues on Commissioners Court supported my request to add Shepherd Road to the Bexar County Flood Control Program.

Last week after a long week of heavy rain fall and three years after the fatality on Shepherd Road, I had the wonderful pleasure to celebrate the beginning of construction of the Shepherd Road flood control projects. I was joined at Elm Creek Elementary School by Southwest Independent School District's Superintendent, Dr. Lloyd Verstuyft, school board members, school Principal Louis Rojas, students, County staff, and many members of the community to celebrate the ground breaking of two extremely important and life saving flood control projects.

The Shepherd Road project is a \$2.2 million flood control measure that will design, reconstruct, and replace the existing low water crossings on Shepherd Road at Black Hill Branch and along Elm Creek. These constructed improvements will bring greatly needed flood relief to the area and will also withstand the 1% chance, 100 year storm event. The crossing at Black Hill Branch was designed to be constructed with multiple box culverts. The crossing at Elm Creek will be constructed as a 180 foot bridge. The channel improvements at both crossings will be regraded both upstream and downstream and is scheduled for completion next year in October 2011.

This Shepherd Road project is just one of 23 county wide flood control projects. In 2007, under the leader of County Judge Nelson Wolff, Bexar County Commissioners Court developed a 10 year, Bexar County Flood Control Program with \$500 million in a regional capital improvement projects investment.

In Precinct 1 alone, we have 7 major flood control projects with a total investment of approximately \$35 million all are aimed to decrease flooding, provide un-flooded access for drivers, develop construction, and add improvements to reduce flooding in residential areas. These improvements projects are my commitment to improve Precinct 1 and Bexar County. As

representative of Precinct 1, I will continue to develop ways to improve OUR community and YOUR quality of life because safety of this community remains at the forefront!