

Use information on flooding wisely

Express-News Editorial Board

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Bexar County is spending \$3 million to expand a high-tech program to alert motorists about dangerous driving conditions at flood-prone areas in suburbs and unincorporated areas. That's a good investment in public safety.

But its usefulness is ultimately dependent on drivers exercising common sense.

South Texas weather and the region's geography make San Antonio and the surrounding area prone to flash flooding. City and county leaders have been trying to alleviate the problem for a century or more. Events in 1913 and 1921 prompted the first major public projects to reduce the danger of flooding.

The latest county effort is a 10-year, \$500 million flood control program approved by Commissioners Court in 2007. Part of the program is paying for an expansion of the High-water Alert Lifesaving Technology system from 10 demonstration sites to 43 additional locations across the county.

The HALT system will link real-time monitoring of flood-prone roads

and crossings with on-site warnings such as flashing lights and barricades. When complete, residents will be able to access a county website with up-to-date information on road conditions.

It's up to drivers, however, to use that information wisely.

With almost every significant rain event come incidents of drivers ignoring warnings, going around barricades and entering dangerously flooded roads. Frequently those require dangerous high-water rescues. Too often, they result in death.