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Evans Road to get new bridge

By John W. Gonzalez/jgonzalez@express-news.net

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Photo: Express-News Graphic

A flood-control project set to begin in North Bexar County finally will eliminate a dangerous low water crossing on Evans Road, county officials said Tuesday.

Meeting with residents of Precinct 3, Commissioner Kevin Wolff said the 15 months of construction might add to delays in an area already bustling with road and subdivision construction but that the \$4 million project could be a lifesaver.

Starting in September, a bridge will be built on Evans Road at Elm Waterhole Creek, part of the Salado Creek watershed that's notorious for flash flooding. The road is often closed at the crossing during heavy rains, such as those in 1998 and 2002, which Wolff said might seem like distant memories during the current drought.

"It will flood again, and hopefully we'll be better prepared," he told several dozen residents from the Fossil Creek, Fossil Ridge, Fox Grove and other subdivisions who gathered at St. Padre Pio Catholic Church.

To the residents' relief, construction planners said the work, slated to end in December 2012, won't close Evans Road to traffic because the existing road will remain in use as one half of the 1,200-foot-long span's width is built, then the other.

When done, the 70-foot-wide bridge will have four lanes, sidewalks and shoulders. But until money is secured to improve Evans Road, it will remain two lanes in the area of the bridge.

The project is one of 35 flood-control projects under way around the county as part of a 10-year, \$500 million initiative. Fourteen of the projects are in Wolff's rapidly growing precinct, including major works on Hausman Road.

Residents thanked the county for addressing the area's flooding dangers, but some said other issues are equally pressing.

Those who live in unincorporated areas and rely on county services expressed concerns about law enforcement response times. Several said they were recently informed by their mortgage companies that they need to buy flood insurance because of changes in flood plain maps and that fighting that designation could require costly surveys. Others wondered why garbage pickup isn't mandatory.

Wolff said many newcomers to unincorporated areas often are surprised by the differences between city and county services.

“They don’t even have a clue that they’re outside the city limits,” he said.

He added that providing basic services to those in unincorporated areas is one of the biggest challenges facing the county but that the county is gradually addressing infrastructure needs, although simultaneous projects can be aggravating to residents.

“On a daily basis, it’s got to be a heck of a nightmare,” he said.