

Fed funds for city's levee work

By Nancy Pasternack/Appeal-Democrat
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Officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced this week that they plan to award \$9.25 million in stimulus funds for repairs to the Marysville Ring Levee.

The 7.5-mile long levee, designed to protect the city from flooding, is currently undergoing an extensive survey by the Corps.

Construction is expected to begin in spring 2010. The stimulus money will allow the start of an expansive, \$40 million to \$50 million project meant to raise the level of flood protection for the city to a 200-year level or higher.

A 200-year flood is classified as a flood event with a one- half of 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year.

The stimulus award money, said Curt Aikens, general manager of the Yuba County Water Agency, "is the single most significant item in 20 years for moving Marysville levee improvements ahead."

The Water Agency's involvement with local levees began after the 1986 flood. The agency, in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers and the state, created the Yuba River Basin Project — an extensive repair and improvement plan involving levees south of Marysville to what is now Plumas Lake.

Marysville Ring Levee upgrades had been expected to cost about \$28 million then.

But shortly after the plans were authorized by Congress in 1999, said Aikens, standards for levee design changed, and the work was dead in the water.

The creation of a revised plan is currently awaiting final engineering reports and documentation, according to an April 17 staff report to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

A new plan must reflect changes in design standards, costs, and environmental effects to the levee that have been surveyed during recent studies.

The ring levee project is expected to take three to five years to complete and require a total of about \$32 million in federal funds, \$12.6 million in state funds and \$5.4 million in local funding.

Marysville Levee District Superintendent Frank Miller said a local levee tax will likely be reassessed for the November ballot.

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