

Grant funding to help ease Uniontown flooding woes

By Patty Yauger pyauger@heraldstandard.com | Posted: Friday, July 8, 2016 2:00 am

Bits and chunks of concrete can be seen lying alongside and in Redstone Creek as it flows under and behind Grindle Station, located along Pittsburgh Street in Uniontown.

The level of water was only about ankle-high this week, but as city officials are well-aware, the stream depth can change in a matter of minutes if torrents of rain begin to fall from the sky.

The retaining walls built in the early 1900s to maintain the boundary of the waterway, adjacent to the business, are beginning to show signs of deterioration, and after the mid-June flooding in the downtown area, officials are welcoming the announcement that funding will be available to repair the most critical portion of the wall.

The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority was one of five entities in the 32nd Senatorial District represented by state Sen. Pat Stefano, R-Bullskin Township, and 51st Legislative District represented by state Rep. Tim Mahoney, D-South Union Township, to receive funding for a variety of projects, including the repair to the retaining wall at Grindle Station.

The \$167,193 Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) grant was applied for more than a year ago after Grindle Station owner Tim Grindle approached Uniontown city officials and the authority about the issue.

“The earlier repairs to the bridge along Pittsburgh Street by PennDOT brought attention to the retaining wall deterioration,” said Andrew French, authority executive director.

“(Grindle) then started looking for help to see if there was any funding available to make the repairs.”

Grindle, French and Uniontown Mayor Bernie Kasievich believe that should the aging wall



Redstone Creek wall

Thalia Juarez | Herald-Standard
The retaining wall alongside Redstone Creek behind Grindle Station will be repaired following the approval of grant funding from the state. Grindle Station owner Tim Grindle approached city officials about a year ago about the walls, which were built in the early 1900s, showing heavy deterioration.

fall during a heavy storm, it would have a devastating impact on an already critical situation for the city.

“It has long been an area of concern,” said French. “Debris has a tendency to accumulate in that area. If that wall would fall, floodwater could back up and cause very serious damage.”

Uniontown residents, business owners and first responders are very familiar with the impact of flood waters.

In mid-June, Beeson Avenue, Church, Iowa, South and Jefferson streets were turned into waterways. The flooding closed the local food bank, library and post office. Vehicles were damaged beyond repair, and it took days for city officials to clean up.

The collapse of the Redstone Creek wall near Grindle Station would only compound the problem, said French.

“The repair work is not going to address Uniontown’s flooding problems, but it will eliminate one potential problem,” he added.

According to preliminary design plans, the project includes a 70 foot by 12 foot project area.

French said that the authority has yet to receive confirmation of the award, but has learned from other sources it is forthcoming.

After a contract with the state is signed, bids will be sought for the project.

“We could possibly award a contract late this year or early 2017,” said French.

The state CFA is under the umbrella of the state Department of Community and Economic Development. The pool of grant money is made available through Act 13 of 2012 impact fees.

The CFA grant funding is earmarked for a variety of projects, including abandoned mine drainage abatement and treatment; baseline water quality data monitoring; flood mitigation; various state municipal water authority projects; greenways, trails, recreation projects and other related issues.

In addition to the Redstone Creek project, other CFA awardees included:

n Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$276,570 for an acid mine drainage reclamation project at the Spruell strip mine site to prevent further pollution of Glad Run and Dunbar Creek and \$30,000 for the construction of a 3,000 foot Whetzel Memorial Hiking Trail in Confluence Borough.

n Seven Springs Borough, \$100,000 to build the Easy Mountain Loop and Lake Tahoe Loop walking/cycling trails.

n Connellsville City, \$50,000 to replace a damaged boat ramp in Yough Park.

n Mountain Watershed Association, \$100,000 for the development of the Indian Creek Valley Trail gorge section.

“I am pleased that our region will benefit from this much-needed state funding for important public improvements to better serve area residents and businesses,” said Stefano. “There local projects will help to contribute to our local economy and improve the quality of life for those who live here.”

The funding will allow for improvement of the quality of life for residents, added Mahoney.

“Whether it’s improving the environment or helping people take greater advantage of the scenic outdoors, we all win with these types of state investments,” he said.



