

The Ouachita CITIZEN

Alexander nabs federal revenue for Bayou DeSaird (11/11/2005)

5th District Congressman Rodney Alexander and his constituents have had a good week.

First there was the news Alexander had secured some \$13.887 million for the U.S. Corps of Engineers for dredging the Ouachita River for improved barge traffic.

Wednesday, Alexander announced a \$250,000 appropriation from Congress so the corps can proceed with plans to cleanup Bayou DeSiard in Monroe and points north.

It's a project important to the Ouachita Parish Police Jury.

Alexander secured the funding for both projects from the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee.

"It's pleasing to be able to come through with funding for worthwhile projects that benefit the people of our district," Alexander said. "And it's always easier to secure funding when local and state officials are actively involved in the project."

"We never know when we will have to rely on that water (Bayou DeSiard) for needs other than just to admire," said Alexander, R-Quitman.

Ouachita Parish Police Juror Paul Hargrove said the project, which will clear dense vegetation from the bayou, is more than just "prettifying up the water" for the residences there.

"This is a water quality issue," said Hargrove. "Bayou DeSiard is a major source for drinking water on the eastern side of the parish, and we've got to be sure it remains a source for potable water."

Meanwhile, Alexander was quick to acknowledge the help U.S. Rep. Mike Cross, D-Arkansas, delivered in helping secure the almost \$14 million in federal funding for dredging the Ouachita in Arkansas and throughout the 5th District in Louisiana.

The Corps of Engineers routinely cite the need to dredge the Ouachita to maintain a certain depth for barge traffic. Keeping the Ouachita dredged also has been cited as important for the development of the port in Ouachita Parish.

"I want to thank Congressman Mike Cross of Arkansas for his continued help and continued support in the problems for the Ouachita River," Alexander said. "He and I recognize how important it is to keep the river dredged to handle the barge traffic that is so vitally important for our economy."

"Both of our states benefit from the commerce generated by the Ouachita River," Alexander added.