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Gingrey presents \$500,000 check to Euharlee
Rebecca Long - Staff Writer

Rep. Phil Gingrey presented a \$500,000 check to Euharlee officials Monday. The money, which is part of the Transportation Enhancement Program, will be used to refurbish Milam Bridge into a pedestrian crossing.

"There are a lot more applicants and a lot more needs out there that we are not able to fund," Gingrey said. "This \$500,000 of funding to the Milam Bridge project is huge. We don't usually fund at that level. More often it's \$100,000 or \$250,000. A number of folks who had worthy projects weren't able to get anything."

Plans for the bridge will turn it into a pedestrian and bike crossing from one side of the city to the other by cleaning up the structure, adding wood planking and fencing on either side. Currently there is no such way for people to walk from one side of the Etowah River to the other, as the bridge that carries vehicles across the river was closed to pedestrians for safety reasons.

"When we did sit down with [Gingrey] it was clear to begin with that this was a project we wanted to fund," Georgia Department of Transportation Board Member David Doss said. "It was the very first one we did fund. That speaks for the application and the quality of the application."

The application, which was reviewed and approved by a committee, was completed by Euharlee City Manager Frankie Harris and Zoning Administrator Bobby Gay. In addition to the \$500,000 in funding, the city will use \$200,000 of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax money.

Carl Jacobs completed a replica of the bridge, which will be on display at the upcoming Bartow County Government Expo Day, April 19. The replica has enthralled many of the visitors at Euharlee City Hall, including Gingrey.

"I'm very impressed by the design. It looks great," Gingrey said. "I'm hoping we're going to start turning dirt and driving nails pretty soon."

According to the Georgia DOT, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 first created the Transportation Enhancement Program, which is a reimbursement program. Only certain projects are eligible for the program, including facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, historic preservation, and archaeological planning and research. The program provides funds for alternative transportation projects, such as sidewalks, bike trails, rail depot renovations and streetscape improvements.