

Clay County Progress

\$1 million expected in stimulus money

Wednesday, May 13, 2009 1:11 PM CDT

The cash may not be in the bank, but Clay County manager Paul Leek is confident grants totaling more than \$1 million are a done deal.

North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue recommended that Clay County be approved for \$1.07 million from the Appalachian Regional Council in the first round of distributions from federal stimulus money. These funds come from the state's drinking water fund.

"We have not received word that we have this money," Leek said, "but I am confident the money will come through."

The money will pay for a project to connect Clay County's water supply with Towns County's. The purpose is to provide emergency water to Clay County residents if a natural disaster or other problem strikes. The project is expected to cost about \$1.6 million.

This grant is in two parts, Leek said. Half of the money is a grant, which the county does not have to repay. The other half is a zero-interest 30-year loan.

"We have to get approval from the local government commission to make sure we are eligible to borrow \$500,000 for this project," Leek said.

The county has already received \$500,000 from the Rural Center for the project and another \$300,000 from the Appalachian Regional Council. That gives the county enough to move ahead with the project, if commissioners give their okay.

"We are ecstatic that we got the money in the first round," Leek said. The county is also awaiting word on an application for additional stimulus money from the Clean Water fund. The county requested \$500,000 to pay for half the cost of upgrading the wastewater treatment facility. The Rural Authority has already awarded \$500,000 grant.