

Officials mapping flood-prone areas

By Joni Simon
Contributing Writer

Now that all of the flood maps have been updated, local officials hope the results will spur the city and the county to take certain actions, Nefi Garza, a San Antonio River Authority engineer, told the Leon Springs Business Association during their August luncheon.

"The message I want you to take from this is because of these maps, because of the digital information that has been created, we are now able to identify areas at risk," Garza said.

With the aid of the maps, SARA and Bexar County officials can pinpoint where detention, retention and canalization projects are needed in the area, he added.

In addition, the Flood Insurance Rate maps identify what flood rates will be.

"This will benefit those of us who live in these areas as well as developers who want to build in them," Garza said. "The map modernization of Bexar County is extremely valuable to us all and it is one of the most detailed in the state."

Everyone lives in a flood

zone, according to Garza, who said 20 to 25 percent of all flood claims actually occur in low to moderate risk areas.

Garza told the LSBA that many people have a misconception of what the 100-year flood means.

"They ask that if it's a 100-year flood, why does it happen every two years? What the

100-year flood means is that there is a one percent chance," Garza said. "We don't know what Mother Nature is going to do, but we do know about risk and probability. Imagine you have a dice with 100 faces. We rolled that one percent in 1998 and 2002."

A 100-year storm is measured at 10 inches of rain in a period of 24 hours.

Citizens can view the maps at www.BexarFloodFacts.org. In a twofer water-related luncheon, LSBA members also heard from a San Antonio Water Systems planner, who told them growth cannot be stopped.

However, Brandon Leister said, although the area has grown 30 percent, water consumption has remained the same.



Photo by Joni Simon
Brandon Leister, planner for SAWS, fields a question from an LSBA member.