

The Town of Seaboard recently received some positive news about its aging infrastructure.

The town has received a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan in the amount of \$999,280 from the State Division of Water Infrastructure. The money will pay for the replacement of 3,200 feet of 2-inch to 8-inch waterline along Harris, Eastwood and James streets. According to documentation provided by the State Water Infrastructure Authority, the loan comes with full principal forgiveness. Principal forgiveness is foregoing of a portion of unpaid debt by a lender. The foregoing of the given portion of unpaid debt lowers the amount of money that the debtor owes to the lender in the long run. The replacement of the water lines is just one part of the water infrastructure the money will go to help improve. It will also pay for the installation of emergency generators for the Peanut/Market Well #1 and Crocker Street Well #2, installation of a new booster pump station and chemical storage building.

Seaboard Mayor Geraldine Langford said in a prepared statement sent from the Upper Coastal Plains Council of Governments — which helped Seaboard town officials apply for the loan — she was looking forward to the noted work getting underway.

"We are very excited to beginning this work," Langford said. "Construction on this project should start in summer/fall 2021."

UCPC of Government Planning and Development Services Program Director Ron Townley expanded on Langford's comments.

"The work won't start until 2021 because even with the loan awarded, there is a lot of work to do," Townley said. "There are a lot of forms to fill out, a lot of due process, requests have to be prepared. There's a lot of back and forth with the state. The Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government will help the town with that whole administrative process so that the work can get done. It's just a process that has to be dealt with, so it's not like there's any delay. It just takes a while for everything to happen before the actual work can take place."

Townley added, "I can't say for certain how old Seaboard's water system is, but towns of its size, normally their water systems were built after World War II during the late 1940s and early 1950s. This is fundamental infrastructure work that the town needs."

Northampton County Public Works Director Kirk Rogers offered statements similar to those of Townley during a separate interview Thursday.

"Anytime a town or city can make improvements to its infrastructure, that is an opportunity for growth for that municipality," Rogers said. "As far as Seaboard goes, these coming improvements will help the town come into compliance with the county's water and wastewater maintenance guidelines." Seaboard's loan was one of 11 awarded to counties statewide from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Among the other municipalities that received loans from the fund were cities and towns, such as Dunn, Goldsboro and Greenville. In total \$45,552,436 in loans were provided to municipalities from the fund.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund provides financial support to safe water programs at the state and local level nationwide, according to a press release. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund was created in 1996 as an amendment to the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Act.