

# Local levee share

## Engineer says closer to \$3 million

13 Dec 78  
Mt Vernon

MOUNT VERNON — Skagit County's share of the bill for Army Corps of Engineers levee improvements on the Skagit River is closer to \$3 million than the \$10 million announced by the Corps last week, according to County Engineer and Public Works Director Gene Sampley.

Sampley explained to the county commissioners Tuesday that the Corps figure assumes the county has no rights of way for the \$55 million project. The county actually has about 75 percent of the rights of way, he stated.

Easements on the remainder might also be cheaper, he commented.

The \$10 million figure also assumes the county will construct the best possible roadways to replace those which must be moved, Sampley said. But the county can get by with a less expensive plan, he explained.

Roadway relocation could be a portion of the project which local contractors could construct, he offered.

A public meeting on the latest Corps proposals for Skagit levee improvements, which would offer 100-year flood protection to Mount Vernon and Burlington and 50-year protection to rural areas below Mount Vernon, is set for Wednesday, Dec. 20 at the county courthouse.

According to Corps of Engineers figures, the county share of the project would be \$9.4 million, with \$3 million in road relocation, \$3 in acquisition of rights of way and \$1.6 million for other costs, which could include relocation of boat ramps, connecting dikes and flood gates, Sampley said.

The county must also pay \$1.6 million in design and engineering costs.

Actual costs for the county share of the project may not be known until the Corps completes design work, but the county share should be closer to the \$3 million previously submitted to county officials, he stated.

In a related matter, Sampley presented a copy of letters he will send regarding inclusion in the Corps legislative package to Congress of a county request for a 50-year loan to help finance the county's share of the levee improvement project.

Continued funding for work on levee improvements from the railroad bridge just north of Mount Vernon upriver to Sedro-Woolley is expected to be considered when Congress reconvenes in January.

A letter to the Corps also requests that the total project be broken down to smaller increments so that local contractors can bid and perhaps benefit the local construction industry, Sampley said.