Upgrades coming to West Union

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WEST UNION — New sidewalks and new water lines are just a couple of examples of how West Union is improving its look.

The lower east side of Main Street was in need of new water lines, as compromised areas of the pipe made it nearly impossible to keep the water clean.

"They were old lines," said Mayor Sharon Nunnery. "We were awarded a grant to replace them."

The grant came through for a total of $29,900. Nunnery was pleased to announce that the now completed project saved the state more than $10,000.

"We were able to get the work done by ending up way under budget," she said. "We're happy that the money can go back into other projects around the state."

The town was also awarded C-funds to replace the sidewalks above the compromised line, but Nunnery worked to get more than one area replaced.

"We were able to get enough money to replace the sidewalks on both sides of the road up and down Main Street," she said. "They, too, were very old. So, it will make Main Street a nicer place to walk around."

In addition, Nunnery and the town are continuing their efforts when it comes to raising money for the proposed city park and renovated schoolhouse on Highway 11.

"Next week, I'll be going around to area businesses and speaking with their managers about the park and school," she said.

The plan for the public park includes a refurbished brick schoolhouse that could be used for a visitor center, museum and/or for special events. A large green space would be sprinkled with picnic tables, benches, walking paths and a gazebo.

"The estimated cost for everything, including the building, gazebo, water feature, walking trails, sidewalks, parking area and landscaping will be around $600,000 to $700,000," she added.

West Union has already been awarded a small grant for park benches and receptacles, she said.

"We are waiting to hear back from two other grants we've submitted. We hope to hear good news. This would be a great thing for the county. Highway 11 is a heavily traveled road. If tourists could stop at this visitor center and park, they would find out about downtown Walhalla, historic Westminster and, of course, Ram Cat Alley. There is so much to explore in Oconee County and something like this would very much help out with showing visitors the way."