



GBHS students help spread flood awareness

From Staff Reports

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GBHS seniors Alexandria Holloway and Caleb Homa stand next to the High Water Mark signs they helped create in their Digital Design II class this year. Submitted Photos Following the flood last April, the county's Flood Mitigation Plan Task Force stepped into high gear negotiating ways to help educate locals and visitors of flood prone areas.

One of the initiatives they helped kick off was the High Water Mark Initiative.

The idea was thought up by FEMA and several other agencies. The flood education program erects signs in areas that are known to flood during periods of heavy rain.

The goal of the program is to draw attention to area flood risk by marking how high the water has risen in certain areas during flooding events.

While the signs were not posted in neighborhoods, they were utilized in areas such as the Shoreline Park Boat Launch, the Bay Bridge Boat Launch and Oriole Beach Boat Launch. The signs were completely funded by FEMA.



Much of the storm damage that occurred last April was in moderate to low-risk areas where National Flood Insurance Program flood insurance policies started at nearly \$100. The High Water Mark Initiative, according to the county, is a way to help remind people of the community's flood history and the importance of being insured.

Recently, the county and FEMA helped erect the signs near several areas in the south end including the boat ramps.

Local students in the Academy of Multimedia Design and Technology at Gulf Breeze High School helped the county with the project.

Last fall, students in Digital Design II were commissioned to create the sign design and worked closely with the area Floodplains Manager, Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, NOAA, Florida State Emergency Response Team, City of Gulf Breeze, City of Milton, HUD, Santa Rosa Emergency Management, the National Weather Service and the Northwest Florida Water Management District to create the design.

One of the other positives to the program is it helps earn Community Rating System Points through the National Flood Insurance Program, which in turn helps drive down insurance premiums for homeowners who live in areas with the signs.