

City acquiring former Coast Tires site in flood buyout

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TILLAMOOK — Some time next month, the city expects to take possession of 2.76 acres of land that will be used as open space along U.S. 101.

It's the former Coast Tires site at 635 Main Ave. N, just south of the Safeway store.

City Manager Mark Gervasi said the city is acquiring the land with grant money, most of which was furnished by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under a program that enables local governments to buy out businesses in flood prone areas that have been damaged by flooding.

Gervasi said Coast Tire had filed a number of claims for funds to restore the building and its contents following flooding since 1996 and that its owner, Bay City resident Steve Baertlein, had approached the city about a buyout.

The FEMA program pays acquisition costs based on pre-flood appraisals at a rate of 75

Land will remain as open space

cents on the dollar. Gervasi said Baertlein would receive about \$165,000.

According to Gervasi, the Tillamook Estuary Partnership and the Tillamook Bay Habitat and Estuary Improvement District also contributed a total of \$3,750 to help with acquisition costs.

"The city really appreciates their help in this effort," Gervasi said. He added that funds to help with environmental work on the site were provided by the Oregon Economic and Commercial Development Department.

The Coast Tire building has been torn down and only the slab it was built on remains. Water from two well-sampling sites on the lot will have to be tested by the Department of Environmental Quality, Gervasi said.

To be eligible for help with

the acquisition, the city had to agree to let the land remain as open space. The Coast Tire lot is bordered on the east by privately owned wetland that is contiguous to the Hoquartin Slough.

Gervasi said the city is pursuing a plan to acquire 19 acres of that land with grant money from the Oregon State Parks Department and the Department of Land Conservation and Development for possible development of a nature trail.