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Grant awarded to improve roads and highways in Rankin County

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More than \$25 million is expected to be spent on 33 different projects in Madison, Rankin, and Hinds counties.

The Central Mississippi Planning and Development awarded the grant through their Metropolitan Planning Organization and chose the areas they believed needed the most attention.

"The local communities, all the cities, counties, They apply for these funds. We grade them based on this system. The higher level rated projects get approved," said Mike Monk, of the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District.

Eligible jurisdictions applied in October to have specific projects chosen. The money is coming from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Ward 3 Councilman Kenneth Stokes believes that the city of Jackson needs the most work done.

"We're not trying to take away from wards that have been rewarded these funds, because they need the help also, but if the Capitol city is going to keep growing, we've got to have better roads and better development," Stokes said.



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Hinds County will spend at least 41% of the money, with Rankin at 32% and Madison at 27%.

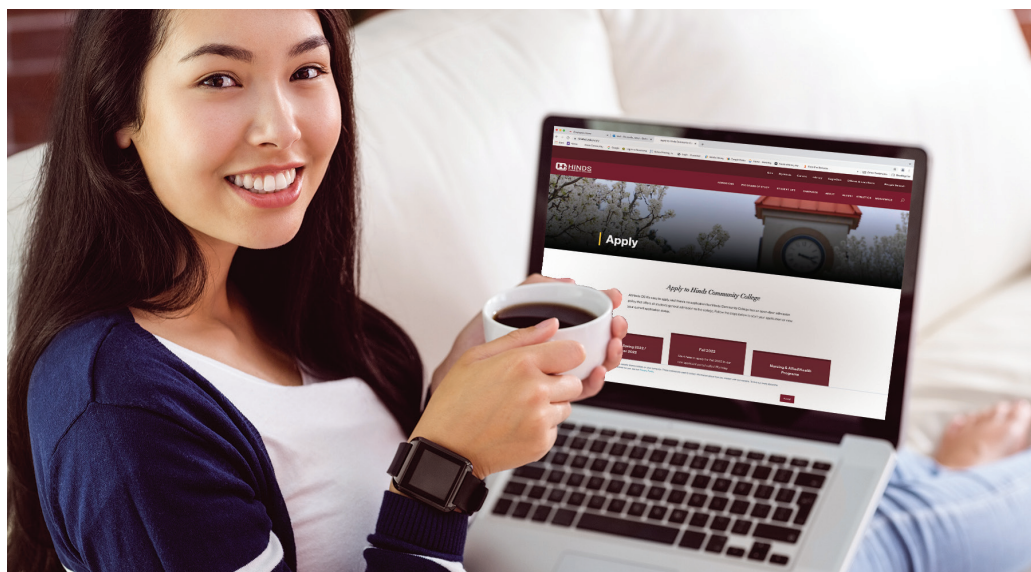
"Every year the cost of building these improvements goes up, and we have to deal with the inflationary costs as well," Monk said.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation will work with crews to complete projects, which are expected to be completed throughout the year.

Meetings to finish these plans will begin in the next couple of weeks.

The 33 projects are expected to take up to 10 years, if not longer.

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