Audrey funding almost cinched

by MONTE WILLIAMS

A brief trip to the nation’s capital last week by the city’s mayor, its attorney and engineer all but nailed down a year-old Coastal Zone Management funding allocation intended for Audrey Hotel renovations.

The money, a $400,000 federal appropriation, should be forthcoming once final approval of the application is given, Abbeville Mayor J. C. Vorhoff said in a Meridional interview Monday.

Vorhoff, attorney Nolan Sandoz and Elray Schexnaidaer, project engineer, met with CZM officials last week to finalize project funding. “We hand-delivered the official application,” Vorhoff stated, “and we anticipate few delays in getting the money.”

The Office of Coastal Zone Management, to be phased out by 1982, makes funds available to areas affected by industrial development and oil and gas exploration.

“We were told we were none too soon in applying,” Vorhoff said of the funding and the phasing of that office. “And we’re fortunate to have gotten this far.”

The inch-thick compendium of project plans, studies and designs is now in the hands of state department officials who are to resubmit it to Washington for final approval.

“Once this is done, the money should be forwarded to us,” Vorhoff added.

Vorhoff says State Sen. Cecil Picard has promised to expedite the matter.

Once the funds are received, work can begin on the 56-year-old Audrey.

Plans call for renovating as much of the ground floor as possible with available funds. This floor will serve as a municipal complex, housing city offices and services.

Other work — including reroofing, painting, water-proofing and refurbishing the exterior — will be done on a bid basis as funds allow.
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become available.

Additional pluses of Vorhoff's trip to Washington included limited sanction by federal officials of city plans to extend sewerage service and improve the airport.

Vorhoff said assurances from Louisiana's legislative delegation that funding would be available for ongoing sewerage projects was welcomed news.

"They felt that since portions had already been funded, Abbeville should have no problem getting funding for other phases of the work," the mayor said.

Though the Reagan administration has put the skids to major transportation project funding, money - primarily funds derived from the federal tax on airports, tickets, and the like - should be available for airport runway extensions and improvements.