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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Update on 2019 Spring Flood – Monday, April 8, 1:00 p.m.

THIRD CREST ARRIVES IN MUSCATINE BUT WILL THERE BE MORE

More snow predicted in Minnesota this week but effects in Muscatine uncertain

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The “Snowmelt Crest” of the Mississippi River reached Muscatine Monday (April 9) with an anticipated crest of 21.88 feet this evening before a gradual drop over the next seven days to 20.1 feet by April 15. However, a strong low pressure system (Winter Storm Wesley) will be moving through the Midwest Wednesday and Thursday, bringing heavy rain to northern Iowa, southern Minnesota, and Wisconsin, and the possibility of 12-18 inches of snow around the Minneapolis, Minn., area.

How this storm system will impact river levels at Muscatine is uncertain, but the National Weather Service expects that the runoff and additional snow melt could slow river level falls or lead to slight rises.

The river has been on the rise since early March and passed flood stage (16-feet) on March 15. The Mississippi River has remained in flood stage for the past 22 days, cresting at 19.34 feet on March 18, and again at 20.73 feet on March 25. Today’s crest will be the third of the 2019 Spring Flood.

The uncertainty of spring weather patterns means that the National Weather Service (NWS) remains uncertain whether there will be another, higher crest but the potential remains through early May. The Mississippi River is expected to remain above flood stage through mid-May.

The City of Muscatine has been gathering data on how the recently reconstructed Mississippi Drive is responding to the flood event as the Mississippi River levels move up and down. One of the goals of the reconstruction effort was to be able to keep Mississippi Drive open longer during high level flood events. In that regard, and in many others, the reconstruction effort met its goals.

The Walnut and Mississippi Drive intersection is the first to be affected by a flood event even after the reconstruction. Before the reconstruction, water would begin to back out from the storm inlet at 18.2 feet, cover two lanes at 19.2 feet, and cover the entire roadway at 19.5 feet. The effect was that Mississippi Drive would be closed from Mulberry to Iowa at 19.5 feet, or earlier, depending on how fast the river was rising.

The reconstruction was tasked with raising the roadbed and improving the storm sewer system to reduce the length of time the street would have to be closed during a flood event. The first test of the reconstruction came in October 2018 when the river crested at 20.65 feet. City crews found that water was visible in the inlets at 19.6 feet but did not begin to cover the street until 19.8 feet. That gain of nearly a foot permitted the street to remain open at least a few more days.

Another area of interest is the Sycamore Street intersection which had been one of the lowest points of the old street and prone to flooding during the early stages of a flood event. Again the reconstruction effort proved beneficial as it was not until the Mississippi River reached 21 feet that City staff noticed water seeping from underneath the railroad ballast and into the street. However, even at 21.81 feet, the intersection remained dry with any flood water making it to the roadway safely draining into the inlets on the river side of the street.

The Sycamore intersection is critical since the Mississippi Drive business district begins at that intersection and proceeds west.

The reconstruction of Mississippi Drive, especially the four blocks from Iowa to Mulberry, allows the street to remain open longer and closed for a shorter period of time. The 2019 spring flood has added much to the knowledge base, and even though the street has been closed from Iowa to Mulberry since March 17, the ability of Mississippi Drive to remain open through moderate flood events has been proven.

The Mad Creek and Muscatine Island levees are inspected annually by the Army Corps of Engineers and inspected by the Department of Public Works twice each year, and has been certified to meet the standards of the Army Corps of Engineers. When the Mississippi River reaches 22 feet the levees are patrolled 24 hours each day.

Staff from the Department of Public Works are monitoring river levels and will implement flood response procedures as needed.

Roads ([Downtown Muscatine Detour Map](#))

- Mississippi Drive is closed between Mulberry Avenue and Iowa Avenue.
- 2nd Street closed at Mad Creek.
- River Road is closed from Cannon Avenue to Sherman Street.
- Highway 22 East is closed between the Fairport Fish Hatchery and Montpelier (Wildcat Den Road area).

Recreation

- Riverside Park is closed.
- Running River Trail System is closed between Cannon Street and Sherman Street, and through Riverside Park.

Facilities

- The floodwall at Mulberry and Mississippi Drive (Structure #1) has been installed.
- The floodwall at 2nd Street and Mad Creek (Structure #2) has been moved into place.

Events

- No events have been impacted at this time.

Other Measures

Pumps have been set, and appropriate gates closed in various low-lying areas of the city.

Sandbags

The City of Muscatine will provide empty sandbags to residents of Muscatine upon request. It will be the responsibility of residents / business owners to obtain their own sand and fill the sandbags. Empty sandbags can be picked up 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Department of Public Works, 1459 Washington Street, Muscatine.

Additional Information

Iowa 2019 flooding www.floods.2019.iowa.gov

Severe Weather Awareness Week and links to local NWS websites www.beready.iowa.gov

National Weather Service – Quad Cities www.weather.gov/dvn/

Levee Breach Study - <http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/745/Levee-Breach-Study>