



CITY OF MUSCATINE  
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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**APRIL 29, 2019**

### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER COULD APPROACH RECORD CREST**

*City preparing for highest crest in 11 years; Mississippi Drive to be closed Tuesday*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The Mississippi River reached 21.95 feet early Monday afternoon (April 29) for the second time this spring, and the National Weather Service is forecasting a crest between 24 and 25 feet later this week. The current NWS forecast is for the Mississippi River to crest at 24.3 feet Wednesday night or early Thursday before beginning a slow fall over the weekend.

The potential for significant rainfall north of Muscatine in the Upper Mississippi Valley basin could push that crest closer to 25 feet or could sustain the river level in the 24 to 25 foot range for a longer period of time.

The record crest at Muscatine is 25.61 feet reached on July 9, 1993.

“We are not out of the woods by a long shot,” Brian Stineman, Public Works Director, said. “We are preparing for the 24 to 25 foot range but significant precipitation north of here in the next few days could move that range up.”

The Mississippi River crested at 23.50 feet on April 25, 2001, 23.81 feet on July 5, 2014, and at 24.42 feet on June 17, 2008. Current predictions are that the upcoming crest will exceed all three. The second highest crest came 54 years ago on April 29, 1965, at 24.81 feet.

The top of the Muscatine levee is 27 feet.

### **NO PARKING ON MISSISSIPPI DRIVE**

The City of Muscatine will be enforcing a hard close of Mississippi Drive from Mulberry Avenue to Iowa Tuesday morning with no parking allowed on the street at that time. Those who have been parking in this section (Walnut to Iowa) of Mississippi Drive will need to find alternate parking. Cars left will be subject to tickets and being towed. Individuals who usually park in Lot A (Sycamore and Mississippi Drive) are urged to find alternate parking as water is already over part of the lot.

“The water at Sycamore and Mississippi Drive is mostly the result of the three-inch rain we received Sunday night,” Stineman said. “That will change as the river continues to rise.”

### **MISSISSIPPI DRIVE TO BE CLOSED MULBERRY TO PINE**

Muscatine Power & Water (MPW) will be turning off power to the traffic signals at Iowa and Mississippi Drive Tuesday morning to prevent damage from the flood waters. The Department of Public Works (DPW) will be setting up temporary stop signs at that intersection. However, the use of that intersection may be short as the City anticipates a hard close of Mississippi Drive from Mulberry Avenue to Pine Street sometime Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning.

“At 24-feet the river will be at the front steps of the old hotel,” Stineman said. “We will probably close Mississippi Drive before that.”

Downtown Muscatine traffic will be detoured down 2nd or 3rd Street from Pine to Mulberry. Drivers can use Park Avenue and the U.S. 61 bypass to avoid the road closures. The main detour for traffic heading east to west will continue to be Park Avenue, to Washington Street, to 5th Street, to Pine and then to Mississippi Drive.

The best advice for drivers in areas affected by flooding is to avoid roads or streets that are covered by water, or, in other words, “turn around and don’t drown”.

## **MORE FLOOD BARRIERS INSTALLED**

The City constructed a berm Monday on the DPW lower lot between 5th and Washington Streets where Mad Creek is expected to spill over its banks. DPW also anticipates closing the rail line flood gate on the Heinz spur where the Mad Creek levee ends.

On Wednesday, DPW crews will be constructing a berm across Mulberry Avenue near the #1 Alley. That would leave the rail line flood gate at Broadway as the only gate left open. That gate would not be closed until the river reaches 26-feet.

## **LEVEE INSPECTION UNDERWAY**

The City of Muscatine continuously monitors the levee system during flood events but once the river level reaches a certain point, that monitoring becomes a 24-hour inspection.

“Once the river level hits 22 feet we will begin 24-hour inspection of the levee system,” Stineman said. “We will be watching for boils and sandbagging as necessary.”

The City has been pumping seep water from several locations since the river reached the 20 foot mark and will continue to do so until the river recedes.

## **POSSIBLE ROAD CLOSURES AHEAD**

Drivers should also anticipate a closure of Washington Street as the river continues to rise above 23-feet. Past observations had water entering onto Washington Street near Fillmore at 23.20 feet (2001) and 23.65 feet (1993).

## **SPRING 2019 FLOOD RECAP**

The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16-feet) since March 15 and above major flood stage (20-feet) since March 22. The record for consecutive days above flood stage is 55

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set in 1993 (June 10-August 3). Muscatine has had 45 consecutive days above flood stage in 2019.

The Great Flood of 1993 had 103 days above flood stage during a stretch of 121 days that lasted from April 5 through August 4.

Flood gate Structure 1 (flood gate at the entrance to HNI off of Mississippi Drive, and flood gate Structure 2 (flood wall on 2nd Street) have been closed since March 22. Structure 1 has been opened twice, briefly, to allow Canadian Pacific to move rail cars to and from the Heinz plant.

The flood panels around the historic homes at the intersection of Mississippi Drive and Mulberry Avenue were installed April 9. Although it is not anticipated that the river level will reach high enough for the panels to come into play, City staff completed the installation and safety checks of the installation that is required every three years by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A wet fall followed by heavy snowfall this past winter in the Upper Mississippi River Valley led to the Spring Flood of 2019. The first crest at Muscatine came on March 18 at 19.34 feet and, after a brief drop, a second crest occurred on March 25 at 20.73 feet. Again the river had a brief drop before rising to 21.95 feet on April 10, the third crest of the spring flood.

That third crest is the sixth highest in Muscatine history and the third highest April flood. In 1965, following another wet fall and snowy winter, the Mississippi River crested at 24.81 feet on April 29, a level that held the record for the highest crest until the 1993 flood. The second highest April flood came in 2001 when the river crested at 23.50 feet on April 25. The 2001 flood is the fifth highest crest overall.

Six of the top 10 and 14 of the top 25 Mississippi River crests have occurred during the month of April. Three came in July including the record 25.61 foot crest on July 9, 1993, two in June including the third highest crest at 24.42 feet on June 17, 2008, two in March, two in May, and two in October including last year's 20.73 foot crest on October 13, 2018.

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

- Mississippi Drive is closed between Mulberry Avenue and Iowa Avenue.
- Mississippi Drive closure to be extended to Pine Street on May 1.
- 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.
- The flood panels for the Historic Homes (Mississippi Drive and Mulberry Avenue) has been installed.

## **Events**

- No events have been impacted at this time.

## **Other Measures**

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

## **Sandbags**



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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](http://www.floods.2019.iowa.gov)

Severe Weather Awareness Week and links to local NWS websites [www.beready.iowa.gov](http://www.beready.iowa.gov)

National Weather Service – Quad Cities [www.weather.gov/dvn/](http://www.weather.gov/dvn/)

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