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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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CITY TO REOPEN MISSISSIPPI DRIVE, OPEN FLOOD GATE

City staff begins work to open 2nd Street flood wall, Mississippi Drive today

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Mississippi Drive and 2nd Street will be open to traffic this afternoon according to City of Muscatine officials.

“Based on the most recent information it appears the river will hold steady near 18.3 feet for the rest of the week,” Brian Stineman, Director of the Department Public Works, said. “At this stage, we feel comfortable that we can open Mississippi Drive and 2nd Street.”

DPW crews will be removing barricades along Mississippi Drive and 2nd Street and then work on opening the flood wall at Mad Creek.

After a rainy weekend and with a forecast of more rain this week, city officials hesitated on reopening Mississippi Drive and the flood wall. Part of that hesitation came from a National Weather Service situation report released last Friday that anticipates the Mississippi River returning to major flood stage by May 23.

“The river is rising at many locations to the north and we have rain forecasted for the rest of the week but we are confident that, at least for now, we will be able to open up the streets to traffic,” Stineman said.

After dropping into minor flood stage (17.7 feet) last week, the Mississippi River is back on the rise, and was in moderate flood stage at 18.25 feet Monday afternoon. Current projections (based on rainfall through Monday morning) has the river reaching 18.3 feet Tuesday and then back below 18 feet by Thursday.

Mississippi Drive was closed to traffic from Mulberry Avenue to Iowa Avenue on March 18 with the closure extended to Pine Street on April 30 as the Mississippi River continued to rise. The street, which recently went through a two-year reconstruction from Mulberry to Broadway, was reopened from Pine to Iowa on May 13 as the Mississippi River receded after cresting at 24.33 feet on May 3, the fourth highest crest in Muscatine history.

Cleanup efforts from Iowa to Mulberry were underway last week as Department of Public Works (DPW) crews removed flood barriers, scraped river mud off the pavement, and worked with the Muscatine Fire Department (MFD) to wash down the pavement.

Riverside Park will remain closed. The Parks and Recreation Department has begun initial cleanup efforts at Pearl City Station but progress is slow with flood waters still surround most of the building along with the Riverview Center further upstream.

“Once the river drops below 17.5 feet it will be easier to get in and start clean up inside the buildings,” Richard Klimes, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said. “It is just going to take time.”

The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16 feet) since March 16 and currently stands at 18.3 feet. The river at Muscatine was above moderate flood stage for 61 consecutive days (March 16-May 16).

The Mississippi River crested at 24.33 feet on May 3, the fourth highest crest in Muscatine history, and has been falling since, and is currently at 18.93 feet. The level is expected to drop below moderate flood stage (18-feet) Thursday, and then level off at 16.9 feet over the weekend.

The Mississippi River dropped below major flood stage (20-feet) bringing an end to a record 50 days of above major flood stage. The river has been above flood stage (16-feet) for 59 consecutive days, also a Muscatine record.

FLOOD ASSISTANCE

The Muscatine County Emergency Management Agency encourages those affected by recent flooding in Muscatine County to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

There are four ways to register for disaster assistance:

- Online at: www.disasterassistance.gov.
- Visit a state/FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC). Go online to www.FEMA.gov/DRC to find the nearest location.
- Call 800-621-3362, voice/VP/711. Multilingual operators are on duty. TTY 800-462-7585. Phone lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time.
- Download the FEMA app on your smartphone at www.fema.gov/mobile-app.

Information on Iowa's flooding and disaster assistance can be found at floods2019.iowa.gov.

RAILROAD TRACKS RAISED

Canadian Pacific raised the railroad tracks from the switch for the Heinz spur east of the Cedar Street crossing to just west of the Iowa Avenue crossing during the height of the flooding last week much the same as Canadian Pacific did in 2014 after the river crested at 23.81 feet on July 4, 2014. Canadian Pacific worked with the City of Muscatine during the track raising event last week.

SPRING 2019 FLOOD RECAP

- A wet fall followed by heavy snowfall this past winter in the Upper Mississippi River Valley contributed to the Spring Flood of 2019.
- The Mississippi River has crested four times since March 15 when the river first exceeded minor flood stage (16-feet). The river rose and fell on four different occasions this spring due to snowmelt and rainfall, cresting at 19.34 feet March 18, 20.73 feet March 25, 21.95 feet April 10, and 24.33 feet May 3.
- In 2019, the Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16 feet) since March 15, a stretch of 66 days which breaks the previous record set during the 1993 flood of 55 days (June 10-August 4).
- The 1993 flood actually had the top two stretches of consecutive days above flood stage (16 feet) separated by a three-week period below flood stage ... 44 days (April 5 through May 19) and 55 days (June 10 through August 4).
- In 2019, the Mississippi River was at or above moderate flood stage (18 feet) for 61 consecutive days (March 16-May 16).
- In 2019, the Mississippi River at Muscatine was at or above major flood stage (20 feet) for 50 consecutive days (March 23-May 11). The old mark was 32 days set in 1993 (June 27 -July 28).
- The 1993 flood had a total of 103 days above flood stage during a stretch of 121 days that lasted from April 5 through August 4.

APRIL CRESTS

- That April 10 crest was the sixth highest in Muscatine history and the third highest April flood crest. 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, three in May including the fourth highest at 24.33 feet on May 3, 2019, and two in October including last year's 20.73 foot crest on October 13, 2018.

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>