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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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EFFORTS CONTINUE BY CITY STAFF AGAINST FLOOD EFFECTS

Listening to, working with those affected by river flooding continues on a daily basis

MUSCATINE, Iowa – As many days as the Mississippi River has been in flood stage, that is the number of days that staff from various City of Muscatine departments have visited with, advised, or helped in many ways the industries, business, and individuals affected by the Spring 2019 flood.

“I am very proud of the work staff has done before and during this flood event,” Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator, said. “The almost daily communication with those affected by the flood waters, the long hours of setting up for and then monitoring the flood conditions, and the ongoing cleanup operations are a testament to their dedication to the citizens of Muscatine.”

While Muscatine is not out of the woods in regards to flooding, current projections are that the worst of the flooding has past. The National Weather Service does anticipate another crest of 19 to 21 feet in early June but that estimate is based on projected rainfall over the Memorial Day weekend.

The Mississippi River is currently at 18.48 feet and is expected to hover around that mark for the next seven days before starting a climb toward 19 feet at the end of May.

WORKING WITH BUSINESSES

Jason Garmoe, Building Division Manager, has been on the job since February 6, 2019, and is one of the newest members of the City of Muscatine staff. As such, and in his role as the top city inspector, Garmoe made it a point to make daily visits to the riverfront.

“As the new guy in town I wanted to make sure that these business owners and other individuals knew that we are here to help them as much as we can,” Garmoe said. “Just visiting with them, listening to the problems they were encountering, and discussing possible solutions was as much a benefit to me as it was for them.”

Public Works Director Brian Stineman, City Engineer Jim Edgmond, and several others from the Department of Public Works have been in communication with business owners since the early stages of the Spring 2019 flood.

“Keeping these business owners informed of what the river is doing and the departments’ response becomes more important as the river level goes up,” Stineman said. “We do what we can, when we can, to prevent loss of life and property.”

While the city cannot cross onto private property due to the risks of and liability for property damage, Stineman noted that he and his staff, and staff from other city departments, will continue to work as close as possible with business owners and others along the Mississippi River.

“We know that certain buildings did have water in their basements due to the high river levels and we know that some buildings have issues with their sewer systems,” Stineman said. “We have worked with these building owners to identify what we can do on the public side and what they need to do on the private side.”

Stineman added that that is something the City does for anyone who has issues with the sewer system, streets, or alleys within the city limits of Muscatine.

Another piece of advice from the City to business owners and others who live and work along the Mississippi River is to not put up your flood control systems yet. The National Weather

Service is predicting up to seven inches of rain to fall over the next week in the Upper Mississippi River watershed and that will have an impact of river levels.

The NWS has high confidence the river will crest at 19 feet between May 31 and June 6 but added that crest might be as high as 22.5 feet, two feet under the previous high crest this spring of 24.33 feet (May 3), depending on the amount of rain falling north of Muscatine.

PAPOOSE KEEPS PUMPING

Jon Koch, director of the Water & Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF), formerly the Water Pollution Control Plant, said that the pumps at the Papoose Creek Lift Station passed the test during the recent high water event. The lift station has three pumps to move water to the WRRF including two large pumps and one smaller pump.

“The smaller pump runs nearly constantly and handles dry weather flow,” Koch said. “The large pumps are wet weather pumps and run during rain events.”

However the two larger pumps cannot be operated at the same time because the discharge pipe will not handle that much flow. That pipe has the combined flow of the Papoose Lift Station and the Mad Creek Lift Station.

It had been reported that the pumps were not fully operational during the recent high flood event but Koch said that was not true.

“Both the smaller and the larger wet weather pumps have been operational since the flood event in September last year when there was a short down time,” Koch said.

The down time did not flood any property because the river was not at major flood levels.

“There have been no failures of any pumps during the recent flooding,” Koch said.

When the Riverside Park roadway went under water due to the high river levels, WRRF staff “boated” out to the Papoose Lift Station on a daily basis to check on and maintain the pumps.

Koch said that the lift station pumps as much as possible automatically at all times when it rains during flood events.

“The Papoose Tunnel is full of water because we cannot release through the flood doors quickly enough when the river levels are so high,” Koch said.

Several engineering studies have determined that it would be impossible to pump the entire Papoose Tunnel during a rain event given that capacity in the discharge pipe is limited.

“We would need 10 times the capacity we currently have to accomplish this and that is just not practical,” Koch said.

WORTH THE EFFORT

One of the many great features of Muscatine is the vibrant riverfront and re-energized downtown district that form an entryway that is second to none in the region. The downtown district has become a destination for both Muscatine residents and visitors, and the City continues work to improve the amenities of this area for the enjoyment of everyone.

“We are looking forward to getting everything cleaned and prepared for the public's use and enjoyment,” Mandsager said of the downtown district and riverfront.

Mandsager added that there is more hard work to be done and the river remaining above flood stage is not helping cleanup efforts. Still, the work goes on.

“All the effort that our staff is putting into this flooding event is worth it to have the community enjoy our beautiful riverfront and the many businesses downtown,” Mandsager said.

MORE INFORMATION

City of Muscatine Flood Resources <http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/547/Flood-Resources>



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

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/