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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BACK TO MAJOR FLOOD STAGE – THE RIVER RISES AGAIN

Severe weather accompanies rising Mississippi River, complicating weather issues

MUSCATINE, Iowa – For the fifth time this spring, the Mississippi River is rising, continuing the rise and fall saga that has been playing out across the Upper Mississippi River Valley this spring. The Mississippi River at Muscatine crossed back into major flood stage at 9:15 a.m. Tuesday (May 28) and continues to rise.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports that the Mississippi River is at 20.38 feet and will rise to a projected crest of 22.8 feet late Saturday or early Sunday. The projection is based on estimated rainfall over the next 24 hours. Any additional heavy rain to the north along with inflows from tributaries could change the projected crest.

“Once the river reaches 22 feet we will begin walking the levees again on a continuous basis,” Brian Stineman, Director of the Department of Public Works for the City of Muscatine, said. “Other than that we are pretty much back to where we were a couple of weeks ago and just waiting to see what the river does.”

The National Weather Service has high confidence that the crest at Muscatine will reach 22.3 feet but also states that the most likely crest range could be between 22.5 and 23.5 feet occurring June 1-3.

The Mississippi River was in the minor to moderate flood stage for the past 17 days and that allowed City staff to clean and reopen, at least temporarily, Mississippi Drive along with some cleaning of Pearl City Station inside Riverside Park. However, projections late last week led to the City closing Flood Structure #1 (at Mulberry) and Flood Structure #2 (at 2nd Street) Sunday (May 26) along with Mississippi Drive from the #1 alley on Mulberry to Iowa Avenue.

The repeated rise and fall of the Mississippi River during flooding is not uncommon. In 1993, the year of the record flood in Muscatine, the Mississippi River had four periods of the river rising and then falling with a record crest of 25.61 feet on July 9 after a crest of 21.29 feet on April 25. The other two minor crests in 1993 came on April 11 (18.23 feet) and Aug. 23 (16.37 feet).

The National Weather Service continues the Flood Warning for Muscatine and has also issued a Flash Flood Watch for the Muscatine area due to the moderate risk of severe weather through Wednesday.

The Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16 feet) since March 16 (73 days) and was above moderate flood stage (18 feet) for 61 consecutive days (March 16-May 16). The river rose back into moderate flood stage on May 19 (71 of the last 73 days)

The Mississippi River dropped below major flood stage (20-feet) on May 11 bringing an end to a record 50 straight days of being above major flood stage. After 17 days below that mark, the river rose back above major flood stage on May 28.

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.

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- 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.

SBA OPENS BUSINESS RECOVERY CENTER

The U.S. Small Business Administration and the Iowa Small Business Development Center have opened an SBA Business Recovery Center in Davenport to provide a wide range of services to businesses impacted by severe storms and flooding that began March 12, 2019. The Center is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fridays at Eastern Iowa Community College located at 101 West Third Street, Davenport, IA 52801.

[SBA Disaster Loan Assistance](#)

[SBA Fact Sheet – Disaster Loans](#)

WHEN THE SIREN SOUNDS

The outdoor warning sirens are activated when a severe thunderstorm warning or a tornado warning is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS), or a tornado or funnel cloud has been spotted by a trained weather spotter. A warning is issued if the NWS or a trained spotter reports winds greater than 70 mph and/or golf ball sized hail or greater is observed.

Straight line winds several years ago caused damage to the community, including the loss of several large trees in Weed Park.

Because of the safety concerns of these thunderstorms is similar to the safety concerns for tornadoes, there is no difference in siren tones. Sirens are also utilized for non-weather safety concerns, which could include a large hazardous materials release or terrorist event.

Residents should also have a battery operated weather radio on hand, or similar device, to keep up to date on weather events.

Read more at <https://www.muscatineiowa.gov/750/Severe-Weather>

TORNADO QUICK FACTS AND PREPAREDNESS

While Mississippi River flooding is one of the biggest concerns in the area, the recent severe weather events, including a pair of tornadoes in southeast Iowa this week, highlights the realization that all types of severe weather (damaging winds, large hail, tornadoes, frequent lightning, heavy rain, flash flooding) are possible at this time of year.

Quick facts you should know about tornadoes:

- Are a violently rotating column of air that extends from the base of a cloud to the ground.
- Can develop rapidly, with little or no warning.
- Can move in any direction, often changing direction over their lifespan.
- Average forward speed is about 30 mph but can vary from stationary to 70 mph.
- Are most likely May through July but can happen anytime of the year.
- Are most likely between 3 and 9 p.m. but can occur anytime.
- Are rated based on the damage that occurs on the Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale, ranging EF-0 (little to no damage) to EF-5 (total destruction).

Preparedness:

- If the atmosphere becomes favorable for tornadoes, a **Tornado Watch** may be issued. A **Tornado Watch** means that any storm that forms in and around the watch area could produce a tornado and you should *prepare to act* if a warning is issued.
- If a storm is about to produce a tornado, or if one is occurring, the National Weather Service will issue a **Tornado Warning**. If a warning is issued for your area, *seek shelter immediately*.
- **Shelter:** Lowest floor, interior room of a permanent structure, preferably a designated tornado shelter.

- **Not a shelter:** A mobile home, car, highway overpass, or under any bridge.

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. After falling to 17.7 feet on May 18, the river level has risen to 18.45 feet on May 24. The river is now on its fifth rise of the spring.
- In 2019, the Mississippi River has been above flood stage (16 feet) since March 15, a consecutive stretch of 73 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), and 71 of the last 73 days. The river returned to moderate flood stage May 18.
- 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 river returned to major flood stage on May 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

- The April 9 crest of 21.95 feet was the seventh 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 sixth highest crest overall.

- Six of the top 10 and 14 of the top 25 Mississippi River crests have occurred during the month of April. Also in the top 25 were three 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.

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

- Mississippi Drive closed between Mulberry Avenue and Iowa Avenue.
- 2nd Street closed at Mad Creek.
- Flood detours reinstated on May 26.
- River Road closed from Cannon Avenue to Sherman Street.

Recreation

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

Facilities

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

Events

- No events have been impacted at this time.

Other Measures



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Seep 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:

Flood Safety Tips and Resources <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood>

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>