

**UNION COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

PO Box 839
301-1 W Mississippi St, Jonesboro, IL 62952
(618) 697-0760 Fax (618) 893-4502



Dana Pearson, Coordinator

DATE: 01/08/2016

As we shift to recovery from the unprecedented flood this past week, I would like to give you an update of the week's events. The recent rains across the State of Illinois and Missouri caused the Mississippi River to rise at a rate that we haven't seen in years. The forecast by the Corps of Engineers was that we could see record levels on the Mississippi River. Many of the County staff and volunteers worked tirelessly on the flood response. Also, it is important to note that many of the employees changed or cancelled their New Year's Eve plans to support the residents of Union County when they needed it the most, and for that I convey my thanks.

The following is a daily list of the preparations and response to the flood event.

Tue. 12/29 – The Highway Dept., Sheriffs Dept., Ambulance Service Director and myself along with the Corp. and Levee Commissioners started patrolling the Levee and roads. We put out a Press Release advising the residents to consider evacuation until the river fell to safe levels and that in the event of a breach the tornado sirens would be activated. The Sheriff's Dept. advised residents that chose to evacuate to fill out a form so they would know to do security checks while they were away. The Highway Dept. closed the Old Cape Road near the Fair City area due to high water. All Levee roads were closed to the public on this date.

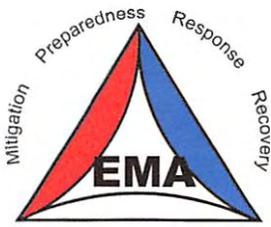
Wed. 12/30 -- The Ambulance Service Director made contact with the POD hospital to advise them of our situation so they could be prepared if we needed to send them a large number of our residents, along with preparing for the ability to receive medications and supplies if a triage situation were needed along with extra transport units. With the help of the Highway Dept. we placed fifteen barricades with road closed signs on the levee access roads. Two electronic message boards were placed at Ware and Wolf Lake to advise residents that in case of a breach there would be a three minute siren warning. The Red Cross was notified that Anna Heights Baptist Church was preparing to shelter residents if needed and to contact them to establish the supplies needed.

Thur. 12/31 -- The Ambulance Service Director and I drove Silica Hill to see if it was passable in case we needed to get an ambulance to Fair City in case of an emergency. We found that the only way we could get to a patient was by a four wheel drive vehicle or boat. The Director placed a directive to his staff advising them of a staging area in case help were needed for evacuations. At 11:00 A.M. the NWS called to inform me that the river crest had been raised to 50 feet. I forwarded the information to the Sheriff and Levee Commissioners and at that time we decided to do another press release to advise the residents of the new predicted river crest prediction. Sand boils were starting to appear along the levee which brought the need for sand bags. A request was made to IDOC for a crew to help fill sand bags for the following day. I notified the County Board Chairman and recommended that we file a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency. The Declaration was signed and faxed to IEMA on this date.



"Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery"
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Fri. 1/1 – The Highway Dept. hauled sand for sand bag crews. IDOC inmates filled 2000 sand bags and were transported to the levee for use by the volunteers. Anna Heights Baptist Church provided meals for all workers.

Sat. 1/2 -- Volunteers were asked to help fill sand bags as more sand boils appeared when the water levels started dropping on the river. The volunteers filled another 2000 sand bags. Anna Heights Baptist Church provided food.

Sun. 1/3 -- The need for sand bags continued as the levee commissioners and their volunteers worked around the clock to stabilize the boils. IDOC inmates filled another 4500 sand bags. Anna Heights Baptist Church provided food.

Mon. 1/4 -- River levels continued to drop as workers continued to monitor sand boils in four hour shifts as things started to stabilize.

Tue. 1/5 -- The river levels continued to fall as well as the need for sand bagging. It was decided by the Sheriff and Levee Commissioners to do a Press Release for Wednesday morning at 8 A.M. to advise residents that the voluntary evacuation was lifted due to the lower river levels.

Wed. 1/6 -- Press Release was put out to the public. IDOC inmates were requested to help store sand bags to be used for future flood events. All signs were taken down and returned to E.T Simonds Construction.

In summary I would like to say how truly impressed I was by the cooperation of all the Union County Agencies, community members, levee commissioners, Anna Heights Baptist and Harvest Church, Coad Chevrolet, Wolf Lake Community Center along with ET Simonds Construction Company, Schaefer Enterprises and Southern FS for their selfless dedication to helping others.

Most of all I would like to recognize the residents affected directly by this event and thank them for working so hard on behalf of their community and for their cooperation during a very stressful time that could have had life changing consequences. Without the dedication of such truly sincere people that live right here in our county this could have had a drastically different outcome. Thank you to our Board of Commissioners for their ongoing support of our county agencies in allowing us the resources to help those in need.

Respectfully,

Dana Pearson, Coordinator
Union County Emergency Management Agency



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