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The Des Moines Register

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023 | THE NEWS IOWA DEPENDS UPON | DESMOINESREGISTER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



The Rev. Michael Shover of Christ the Redeemer Church in Pella, left, argues with Ryan Maher of Des Moines as anti-abortion and pro-choice protesters clash Tuesday in the Iowa Capitol rotunda while the Legislature convenes for a special session to pass a six-week abortion ban. PHOTOS BY ZACH BOYDEN-HOLMES/THE REGISTER

City looks to cut costs on levee upgrades

\$100M project is already \$35M over budget

Virginia Barreda
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Des Moines city engineers and staff are looking to cut costs on a levee improvement project that's already \$35 million over budget.

The city began the eight-phase project in 2020, but with increasing costs, it is looking to implement a system that could help pinpoint and prioritize strengthening the levee system's most vulnerable elements. City Engineer Steve Naber and public works clean water program administrator Patrick Beane presented the new strategy at a City Council work session in late June.

Here's what to know about Des Moines' levee improvements.

What is a levee and why does Des Moines need them?

A levee is a man-made barrier along a river bank to reduce the risk of flooding, Naber said.

Built around the confluence of two of Iowa's largest rivers, the Des Moines and Raccoon, Des Moines has more than 15 miles of levees that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed and built from 1963 to 1972.

Four of them — the Des Moines Water Works, Central Place, Birdland and Raccoon River levees — are accredited by Federal Emergency Management Agency, meaning they meet design, data, and documentation requirements set by the agency. Others, such as one in the Fourmile Creek area, don't meet the standards, but Naber said they're recognized on FEMA's flood probability map because of the work the city is doing to improve them.

The city is no stranger to substantial floods. Flooding in 2008, for example, caused millions of dollars in damage and resulted in hundreds of residents leaving the Birdland neighborhood near North High School.

But flooding can happen "everywhere," Naber told the Register, and there are different types of flooding, such as river rain flooding and flash flooding.

Naber and Beane say overall, the

See **LEVEES**, Page 2A

Iowa GOP fast-tracks 6-week abortion ban as protesters fill Capitol

Stephen Gruber-Miller, Katie Akin and Galen Bacharier
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Protesters' angry shouts echoed in the Iowa Capitol for hours Tuesday, as Iowa Republican lawmakers quickly advanced a bill that would ban nearly all abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy.

The legislation, which was expected to pass late Tuesday, will prohibit abortions after cardiac activity is detected in an embryo, which doctors say can happen as early as six weeks after a pregnant woman's last period.

That marks a sharp deviation from Iowa's current law, which allows abortion up to 20 weeks after conception (or 22 weeks after the last menstrual period).

The Iowa House and Senate gavelled in to begin the session around 8:30 a.m. Tuesday and were set to hold a final vote late Tuesday night.

"This bill protects unborn children in Iowa," said Rep. Shannon Lundgren, R-Peosta. "This bill sets a clear standard where the state has an interest in

See **ABORTION**, Page 5A



Demonstrators fill the Iowa Capitol rotunda as the Iowa Legislature convenes for its special session. Republican lawmakers are aiming to pass a six-week "fetal heartbeat" abortion ban.

"There has not been a rushed process."

Senate President Amy Sinclair
R-Allerton

Surging river floods Vermont's capital

Lisa Rathke
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANDOVER, Vt. — A storm that dumped up to two months of rain in two days in Vermont and other parts of the Northeast brought more flooding Tuesday to communities marooned by water, including the state capital, where officials kept watch on a dam just upstream.

There were signs of hope in some areas with floodwaters beginning to recede, and officials began assessing the damage and the scope of the cleanup ahead.

The flooding has already caused tens of millions of dollars in damage, officials said, with more to come: If water pours over the dam on the Winooski River that flows through Montpelier, it could surge through downtown blocks where the

floods were already waist-high.

City officials said Tuesday afternoon they had not seen any significant changes in the water levels at the dam, but would continue to monitor it.

"Floodwaters continue to rise in some places, like our capital city, and have surpassed the levels seen during Tropical Storm Irene," Vermont Gov.

See **FLOOD**, Page 2A



Karen Matter takes a video of the flooding Monday in Wilmington, Vt.
KRISTOPHER RADDER/THE BRATTLEBORO REFORMER VIA AP

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Volume 175 | Issue 12
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