

INDEX

- BrieflyA6
- ClassifiedsA8
- For the RecordA6
- ObituariesA6
- OpinionsA7

 \$1.25

RETIRE

Dr. Lassen retires
as from medical
director role
See A3



SPORTS

Reichle takes
on athletic
director role
See A9

SIoux CENTER NEWS

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Vol. 131 ~ No. 32

A Growing Newspaper for a Growing Community

www.nwestiowa.com

712-722-0511

Governor issues assistance

Disaster proclamation activates grant support

Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation for Sioux County in response to Saturday's historic 10-inch flooding.

Sioux Center city manager Scott Wynja welcomed the quick response from Reynolds to issue the proclamation, which activates the Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program and the Disaster Case Advocacy Program for Sioux Center residents affected by the Aug. 5 storms.

"We were happy to receive word on the disaster declaration from Gov. Reynolds and certainly appreciate all of the assistance from other entities as well such as Nate Huizenga and Sioux County Emergency Management, Red Cross, various nonprofits and other organizations that have provided cleaning kits and other various assistance as needed at this point," Wynja said. "We never like to see an impact to our citizens in the form of a disaster, but as always, we have a very resilient community that steps up to help each other out. We are working with these various organizations through our office to make sure they are connected with some of these resources that are available."

The Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program provides grants up to \$5,000 for households with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

For an individual, that's \$29,160 annual income or less; \$39,440 for a household of two; \$49,720 for a household of three; \$60,000 for a household of four; \$70,280 for a household of five; \$80,560 for a household of six; \$90,840 for a household of seven and \$101,120 for a household of nine.

Grants are also available for home or car repairs, replacement of clothing or food and temporary housing expenses. Original receipts are required for actual expenses related to storm recovery. Primary home must be in the county, household members must be citizens or legally residing in the U.S. and disaster expenses must not be fully-covered by insurance or other assistance.

Grant application and instructions on the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management website: homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/assistance.

Potential applicants have 45 days from the date of the proclamation to submit a claim.



Mike Frangenberg of Spirit Lake snapped a picture of this tornado while parked on the corner of Highway 10 and Harrison Avenue looking southwest about 2:30 p.m. Saturday. Photo submitted

"I've been with the fire department since 1984; we've never seen anything to this extent. Historic is a good way to describe Saturday."

DAVE VAN HOLLAND,
SIoux CENTER FIRE CHIEF



Ashley Wynja of Sioux Center photographed Central Park downtown Sioux Center during Saturday's historic flash flooding. The floodwaters got so high they ran into the fire department building to the south of the park. Photos submitted

When it rains, it pours

Saturday's 10-inch rain total creates historic flooding

BY RENEE WIELENGA & ERIC SANDBULTE
NEWS@NWESTIOWA.COM

Saturday storms brought historic flooding and damage to the Sioux Center community.

A total of 10 inches of rain poured down, most of which came in two waves — about 7 inches fell around 2:45 p.m. and another 3 inches fell around 6 p.m.

A no travel advisory was issued for Sioux Center and another three miles south of the community.

"I've been with the fire department since 1984; we've never seen anything to this extent. Historic is a good way to describe Saturday," said Sioux Center fire chief Dave Van Holland. "We've had big rain events before but never of this magnitude and never that fast."

The fire department's work actually began before the rains as the two storm fronts collided, creating circulation that resulted in two small tornadoes, one touching down briefly about a mile south of Sioux Center and another three miles south of the community.

"When you get a storm front that meets another front and only going about 5 mph, it really wasn't going anywhere," Van Holland

said. "That rotation was in the same area for about 45 minutes. We even had a couple spotters underneath and couldn't see it. While there was a touch down in a couple places, there isn't any damage that we're aware of at this time."

Then the rains came down. "In my 33 years here, I haven't seen rain like that," said utilities manager Murray Hulstein. "We've seen heavy rains, but 9 or 10 inches? That's heavier than I recall."

The heavy rains caused the basement walls of two homes in town to collapse, Van Holland said, and the residents had to leave their homes due to unsafe conditions.

Roads such as Second Avenue Southeast by New Life Church and Fourth Avenue Southeast near Children's Park became rivers.

Sioux Center Fire worked with the Sioux Center Police Department and Sioux County Emergency Management Services through the Sioux County Sheriff's Office to evacuate seven trailers in Westbrook Village on the northwest side of town due to flooding. More than a dozen roads also had water flowing mid-vehicle high across

see **RAIN** on page A5



Hole No. 13 at The Ridge Golf Course became a massive river.

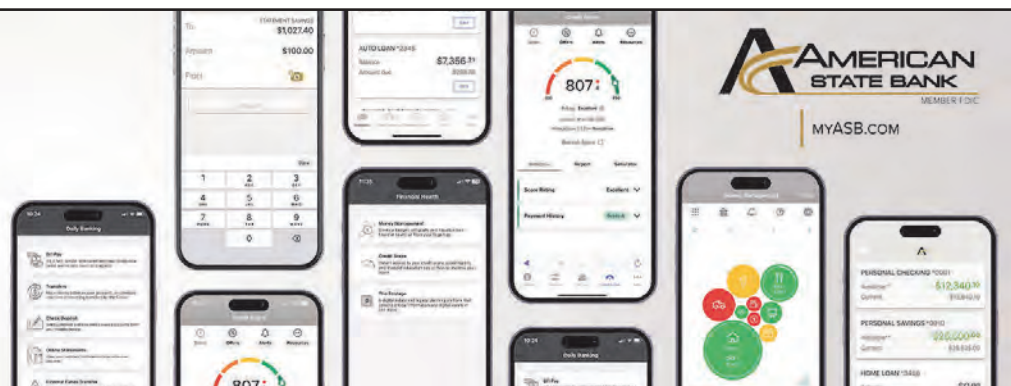


Daryl Olivera of Sioux Center uses a 5 gallon bucket Saturday to try bail out water filling up his egress window well.

**BANKING
MADE EASY,
ANYTIME,
ANYWHERE.**

- BILL PAY
- MOBILE DEPOSIT
- TRANSFERS
- MONEY MANAGEMENT
- CREDIT SCORE
- THE POSTAGE

ALL OF THIS AND MORE
SIGN UP TODAY



News



Katelyn Smit of Sioux Center snaps a picture outside the front door of her home on Fourth Avenue Southeast. Floodwaters spanned beyond the width of the street as it turned the roadway into a river. Photos submitted



Carla Nibelink of Sioux Center captures an adventurous youth kayaking down Second Avenue Southeast that had become a river after the first 7 inches of rain fell Saturday afternoon.

City left to review damages from Saturday's storms

RAIN

Continued from page A1

the road. "We had a lot of people driving through water," Van Holland said. "With all the calls we were getting, we needed to stop traffic from going through water so a no travel advisory was put in place."

The fire department received 27 calls to help people with vehicles stranded in water. Van Holland said about 15 ended up being towed.

The floodwaters filling Central Park adjacent to the fire station backed up into the fire station also.

"Since I've been on the department, we've opened the doors twice that I know of to let floodwaters out. Saturday was the third time we had to do that," Van Holland said.

The most concerning incident to Van Holland was a story he's thankful didn't turn into a rescue call or death.

"We learned of some young men who decided to play in the water at Children's Park and one went through the culvert," Van Holland said. "That's concerning. People probably thought I was the grumpy fire chief on Saturday as we were asking people to get out of the water because flowing water could carry them off. There were manhole covers off, too, and if someone got into there, they wouldn't come out until the plant and that would have been a death. We're just trying to save lives. I'll take the water, I just didn't want anybody dying."

The city's sewer system was the hardest hit by the floodwaters, with the wastewater treatment plant running at full rate for the remainder of the day into Sunday. There was so much pressure within

RAINFALL

Sioux Center.....	10
Hull.....	6.15
Boyden.....	8.29
Sheldon.....	2.22
Sanborn.....	3.26
Rock Valley.....	5

Source: weather.com

the storm sewer system that five manholes around the community became dislodged.

"Our guys stepped up," Hulstein said. "They were out pretty much all night and then the following day were out there making sure everything was working well and the way it should. I appreciate those guys, that's for sure. They get stuff done and do the best they can. But sometimes they call these things an act of God for a good reason. We don't want many of these, that's for sure."

Hulstein said about 3 a.m. the city's system became closer to normal and the wastewater plant was pumping at full rate during that period until mid-Sunday morning sometime.

Having the new wastewater treatment plant helped mitigate some of the flooding seen. It also helped that it was better designed to handle flood situations.

"Our old plant, we probably would have lost our plant if this had happened with that one, and we would have flooded some pumps and would have had to do a bunch of repairs before we could actually treat wastewater," Hulstein said. "It could have been where in years past, we have pumped for days. This one, we felt pretty good that it went down as quickly as it did. Now, that possibly could have something to do with how dry our soil has been and with where the water table



Colleen King of Sioux Center watches as water creates a large pond leading up to her gravel driveway that turns into Thirteenth Street Southwest on the west side of Sioux Center. Floodwaters washed out part of her gravel driveway, leaving them unable to get into town for a period of time this weekend.

was." Now the task is to evaluate how the plant performed and handle any cleanup in the streets.

"We try to sit down and keep track of where our problem areas are and take a look and say, OK, we need to address that," Hulstein said. "Obviously there is some street cleanup that needs to happen. That will be happening. Clean off some mud and some stuff that happened during the flood. Beyond that, we will continue serving our community."

Buckets of emergency cleanup supplies were provided for free Sunday and Monday by the Salvation Army and Red Cross. Some were available at the fire station downtown; others were distributed by members of the city and Red Cross going door to door. Each bucket contained bleach, a mop, a sponge,

gloves and garbage bags. Hope Lutheran Church in Sioux Center also provided free cleanup supplies.

About seven homes in the northwest part of Sioux Center lost power at about 3:30 p.m. when waters submerged an electrical substation transformer.

Crews had to wait for the waters to recede before the transformer could be replaced. When they were able to make that switch, about 15-20 houses momentarily lost power. Power was restored at about 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

"I know many have a lot of cleanup work ahead," Van Holland said, "but there are some things to be thankful for — thankful there wasn't a third round of big rain Saturday, thankful the tornadoes didn't turn into anything bigger and cause even more damage."



A vehicle attempts to drive through floodwaters over Third Street Northwest by the How-To Building Center. Sioux Center Fire had 27 calls for vehicles stranded in water.



Floodwaters filled and broke this egress window, sending glass and debris into a basement room of Laura Heitritter's Sioux Center home.



Sioux Center youth grab pool toys and enjoy splashing in the Sioux Center Public Library's retention pond after the first 7 inches of rain fell Saturday.



Sioux County Sheriff's Office personnel Brad De Kam, Kamra Willams, Seth Maitlen and Sioux Center police officer James Van Veldhuizen assist in public safety during the flash flooding.