

Flood waters close stretch of Atchison road



Flooding at Atchison's Riverfront/Submitted photo by Cathy Scholz

(KAIR)--The flooding of the Missouri River has led to the closure of an Atchison road.

According to an alert issued Friday morning by Atchison County Emergency Management, River Road is closed from the north Atchison city limits to the Doniphan County line.

That comes as the flood waters are out of the banks on that stretch of roadway.

The closure will remain in place until further notice.

Atchison County Emergency Management Director Wes Lanter said that will likely be for several days.

Local authorities have been putting plans into place due to the flood threat.

Lanter told MSC News his office met Wednesday with officials from both the City of Atchison and the County of Atchison to assess the situation.

That was done as a flood warning remains in place, with the flood stage at Atchison Friday morning checking in at 26.38 feet. Flood stage is 22 feet. According to Lanter, citing current predictions from the National Weather Service and the Corps of Engineers, the Missouri River is expected to crest at 31.8 feet on Sunday. The highest recorded crest to date in Atchison was 31.63 feet on July 26, 1993.

The National Weather Service says recent rain, and melting snow, has led to the flooding.

Due to those conditions, the Army Corps of Engineers Thursday night increased water releases from Gavins Point Dam to 90,000 cubic feet per second.

Lanter said as those increases change, so, too, could local planning for handling the flooding.

However, he said it's "fortunate that the City of Atchison is at a higher elevation than other cities along the Missouri River."

The closure of Atchison's River Road means a change for Atchison's Saint Patrick's Parade.

Parade Committee Chair Janie Pickman told MSC News that while the parade route remains the same, the location of the 12:30 check-in for parade participants has been moved. "We're going to have to change the check-in point," Pickman said Friday. "We were supposed to check in at Atchison Street and River Road. We're now changing that to the southeast corner of 4th and Main."

All other aspects of the 36th annual Saint Patrick's Parade through downtown Atchison remain the same, including the 2:00 start time.



Submitted photo by Cathy Scholz

The flood warning is also in affect for Doniphan and Leavenworth Counties, in Kansas, and Buchanan and Platte Counties, in Missouri.

The Doniphan County community of Elwood is preparing for the worst.

The city leaders are encouraging Elwood residents to be prepared, and recommends a mandatory evacuation at 30 feet.

As of Friday morning, the flood stage of the Missouri River at Saint Joseph, Missouri was 24.89 feet, with a predicted crest of 29.2 feet on Wednesday.

Flood stage is 17 feet.

According to the National Weather Service, the high level causes flooding in Elwood and the eastern edge of Wathena.

An Elwood Community Meeting about the situation will be held this evening, March 15, at 6:00 at the Elwood Community Center.

The Associated Press is reporting the U.S. Coast Guard says all traffic on the Missouri River from about 50 miles south of Omaha, Nebraska, downstream to St. Joseph, Missouri, has been shut down due to the river's high water levels.

The order came Friday. The Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also requested all river vessel operators create as little wake as possible between St. Joseph downstream to Kansas City to minimize levee damage.

Officials say the restrictions will be lifted as soon as flooding conditions improve.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.



Submitted photo of sandbags being readied in Atchison/Credit: Cathy Scholz

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