

Flood concerns continue in Doniphan Co

(KAIR)--The effect of flooding was a prime focus during Monday's meeting of the Doniphan County Commission, with updates provided regarding the impact.

According to the minutes of the meeting, Emergency Management Coordinator Julie Meng addressed the issue, telling the Commission that rainfall is expected in the coming week in northern states, meaning an increase in the stage of the Missouri River. At the time she spoke, the river stage was 19.2 feet, just over 2 feet above flood stage.

Meng also informed the Commission that the cities of Elwood and Wathena are in what she described as a fish bowl effect, meaning that ground and rain water is continuing to swell from within the levee. That's due to the flood gates not being allowed to open until the river falls below flood stage.

Currently, both cities are pumping water to relieve pressure on city lagoons.

The City of Elwood evacuated last month when the river reached a level of 30 feet. Residents returned home several days later.

A side effect of the flooding is the rerouting of heavy traffic onto U.S. Highway 36. Meng told the Commission the increased traffic could last for several months, if not into the fall, due to the amount of flood damage to I-29 in Iowa, which has sent traffic onto U.S. 36 through Doniphan County.

Meng, citing figures from the Kansas Department of Transportation, said it's estimated that traffic has increased from 10,000 vehicles a day to upwards of 40,000.

She said motorists need to use caution when traveling, adding that farm machinery will increase on the highway with the beginning of planting season.

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