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FLOOD 2008!



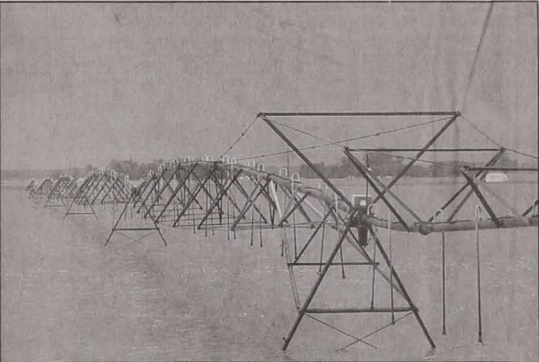
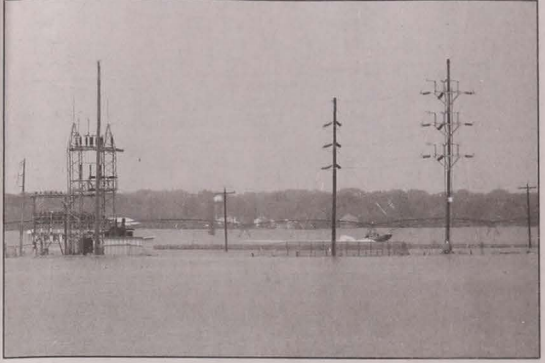
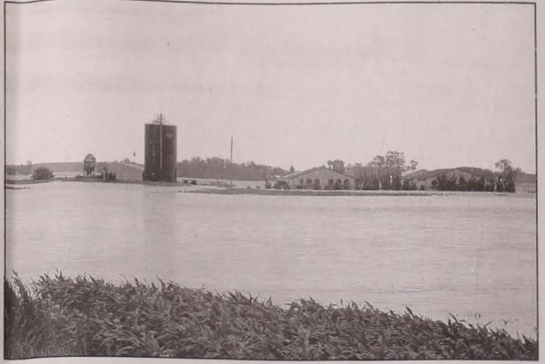
More than words can say...



Friday, June 13, 2008- Sandbagging efforts begin along Highway 99 west of Oakville. Hundreds show up to assist while nearby residents are put on alert.



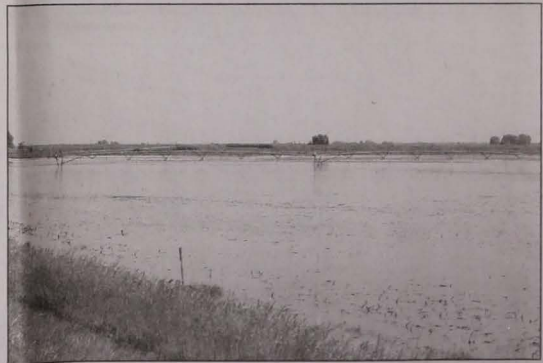
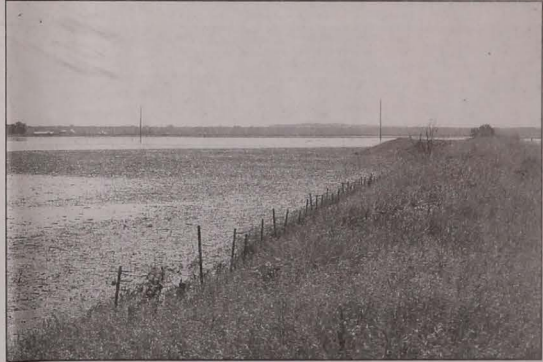
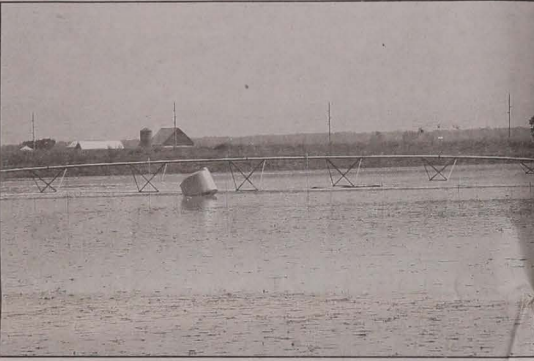
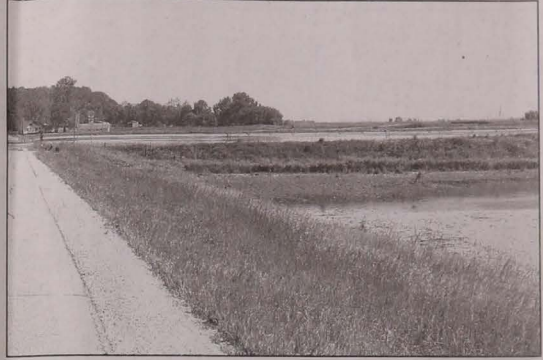
Saturday, June 14, 2008- Oakville Residents brace for the levee break as volunteers gather to sandbag, including members of the Apostolic Church who turn up in hundreds by bus loads from Illinois, Minnesota, and Indiana to assist.



Sunday, June 15, 2008- Locals survey devastation caused by the levee break. An emergency shelter point is set up at the Apostolic Church, which feeds several thousand while sanbagging efforts continue.



Monday, June 16, 2008- Sandbaggers converge where the big ditch and Mississippi River join in hopes of preventing one of the worst disasters in Iowa history.



Tuesday, June 17, 2008- Flood waters extend from the Mediapolis turnoff all the way north, closing down the Apostolic Church, forcing the emergency base to relocate south to Strawberry Point.

Kuntzes' Move to Safety Is Typical of Many

By Betty Massner

Until this week, Bob and Edra Kuntz and their sons and daughters-in-law, Chad and Natalie and Trent and Laura, all lived east of Highway 99 in an area known as The Bottom. Now, despite the efforts of thousands of volunteers who for days tirelessly sandbagged the Iowa River levee, the Oakville levee west of Oakville failed, and their homes are under water.

All of the Kuntz homes had been in either the Kuntz family or in the daughters-in-laws' families for generations. Bob Kuntz's great grandfather built Bob and Edra's house, and if one counts their grandchildren, five generations of Kuntzes have lived there. Chad and Natalie live in the home which belonged to Natalie's grandparents, and Trent and Laura live where Laura's grandparents lived. Needless to say, all feel they have lost a very large part of their family heritage.

The Kuntz family is one of hundreds that experienced the devastation caused by the flood, and their stories and feelings (which follow) are typical of what happened to many during the week of June 9 through June 15.

On Monday, Edra Kuntz says she and Bob knew they would probably have to move, and on Tuesday Edra, with the help of her sister-in-law Roletta Gerst, began to pack up items from her china closet. On Wednesday she called her sister Lois Bucher, who lives in Illinois, to ask if she and her husband Gary could come to help, and they did come on Wednesday afternoon. Also, on Wednesday, Edra emailed friends she usually stays in touch with to tell them she wouldn't be available on line for a while. She says several friends called immediately and came to help. Also, Bob called a cousin in Morton, Ill. to see if he could help, and not only did he respond, but brought along three other people.

On Tuesday, Edra recalls she got boxes and tape from Hawkeye Group. She says they were free and that, in fact, that company gave boxes and tape to anyone who needed them. Soon Lowes and Menards also began to donate, and supplies from all three companies were given out at several distribution points around the area.

On Wednesday, Bob and Edra were able to move to a rented house in Mediapolis. On Thursday, Bob finished moving machinery on to the bluff west of Highway 99. The Kuntzes have hogs, and 150 of these were ready for market so they were sold. However, 260 remained, and Bob is so grateful to Bill Fortin, who not only volunteered the use of his hog building south of Danville, but even came to haul them. Also, Fortin will be custom feeding them, so Bob doesn't have to worry about that.

Once his own issues were somewhat in order, Bob immediately went to work helping others get ready to move.

Edra explained they couldn't help either of their sons' families or receive help from them because they were also in the process of getting ready to move. She says she can't say enough about the community. "People just came, some of whom I didn't even know. We are so appreciative!"

Natalie Kuntz recalls her first inkling that something might be wrong occurred on Monday. "I wasn't even thinking about it; I had hosted a slumber party for my daughter's birthday Sunday night, and I still had girls at my house." She says her husband Chad called and said to start packing things she cared about and to take some digital pictures. However, it wasn't until Tuesday noon that she began to pack in earnest.

"It was really overwhelming. Chad's co-workers along with many others who just started calling and coming to help. I have never felt such an overwhelming feeling of love," Natalie said. "And it was like God had prepared us. I had just given one birthday party, and I was set to have one for my other daughter next week. I had food, drink, paper supplies, etc. on hand. I could feed the people who helped."

Chad and Natalie finished their moving process on Thursday and moved in with their parents, Brian and Cindy Wiegand, who live south of the Hawkeye-Dolbe Division Channel, an area they assumed would be safe from the water. However, the next day they learned that area too could be in jeopardy and began immediately to help the Wiegands get ready to move. Chad and Natalie are now also living in a rented house in Mediapolis.

Trent and Laura Kuntz's story is a similar one. On Monday, while Trent, along with his father and brother, began to haul grain, Laura took digital pictures. On Tuesday, she said Trent called to say they would probably have to move out, and on Tuesday night they began to bring items up from the basement, which they took to the top floor. On Wednesday, Laura says she did her laundry and then started packing. Then Trent called again to say to "scrap moving things upstairs. The water could be too high, and everything would have to be taken elsewhere."

Laura says people started to come from everywhere. Both Chad and Trent work at Golden Furrow, and their co-workers also came to help her. Others included family members and friends and a couple named Ryan and Kelly (she does not know their last names, but that Ryan plays baseball for the Burlington Bees), who came and stayed all day. "I couldn't have moved without Kelly," Laura said.

Trent and Laura also moved to her parents' (Tom and JoAnn Steiner) home, which they assumed would stay dry. But, as in the case of Chad and Natalie, they learned the next day that it too would be at risk. Now they are living with Bob and Edra in their rented house in Mediapolis.

All of the Kuntzes expressed appreciation for those who sandbagged and held the Oakville levee for so long. "It gave us the time to get ready and to get moved," explained Laura. They compared their own experiences to those of people in Cedar Rapids who were taken by surprise with no time to prepare.

Also, all expressed their firm faith that God was with them. Natalie recalled when reading the Bible one morning, Chad opened at random to Psalm 124, a passage about the flood, which reassures everyone that God will be with us no matter what. She also said that her kids read from a devotional book at night, and on one occasion, her entire family was present to receive the message that God will take care of us no matter what.

Laura Kuntz told of a similar experience. She recalled that while still at home, her family read together Psalm 121, and were able to find comfort particularly in Verses 7 & 8, which convey the idea that God is always there. She says it gave them a sense of peace about it all.

All expressed agreement with a sentiment expressed by Edra. "We have losses, but faith in God and help from our community have gotten us through."

Editor's Note: Over the past few days we have all been witness to many heroic efforts by our neighbors and friends. Unfortunately, all of these can not be featured in just one issue. Your stories, testimonies, and heroic acts will be highlighted in the upcoming issues of the Mediapolis News. We promise they will not go untold and will live forever on our pages in our history.



Radell Robertson of Robertson Trucking assists with evacuation efforts "I started helping out Wednesday under the direction of the Gabelines who have been calling all of the trailers and dispatching us to various locations," stated Robertson. -Photo By Danny Davis

Ward Gabeline Trucking Steps Up

By Betty Massner

The flood was coming, and authorities were afraid the levee between Oakville and Wapello would not hold. Residents were first asked and then ordered to leave, and semis were needed to haul both household goods and grain. At this time, a friend called Ward and Trina Gabeline, who own Gabeline Trucking, to ask for help. Not only did the Gabelines send a truck to haul her belongings, but decided to do what they could to help others. Ward explained they began to contact people they deal with on a weekly basis who have extra trailers. He said people were happy to make them available. By using their own trailers, along with those of their associates, they were able to send them to most everyone who asked. Trina Gabeline coordinated where they went and eventually sent drivers in tractors to pick them up. Also, many of their trailers were busy hauling grain. If a trailer was not in the best of repair and might leak, Ward found places where they could be parked inside. He said he sent trailers to the Yarmouth Elevator, Nelson Quarry, the Mediapolis Telephone Company, and to his own machine shed. When the trailers ran out, shipping containers on flatbed trucks were put into service.

The last trailer out of Oakville was being loaded when the levee actually broke. In fact, the Gabelines said their son was one of the ones there still loading

grain. However, everyone got out all right.

"We had a fabulous bunch of guys working with us," Trina said, and the Gabelines want to give credit to all of them.

Trailers and containers were from Holtkamp's, Matt Schimmelpenning at Quality Equipment, and Terry Smith at Agri Center. Schill Transportation supplied flatbeds.

Trailers came from Brad Heald, Dale Thomas, Mick Lutes and Jim Peterson. They were parked at Southeast Iowa Grain, Nelson Quarry, the AC Church, MTC, and at Danny Anliker's.

The following people drove and helped to move people out: Radell and Cathi Robertson,

Jerry Delzell, Andy Kuisle, Melvin Austin, Tim Gray, Tom Wagner, Doug Wallman, Mick Lutes, John Warth, Chad Gabeline, Mike Remick, Taylor Massner, Nick Gabeline, Jeff Hillyard, Kerry Kline, and Steve Nelson, and at the last, Dan Massner, Derek Massner, Chuck Staley, and Todd Rogers.

The entire effort was coordinated by Todd Massner, Scott Anliker, Nick Biggs and, of course, the Gabelines.

"We are a small trucking company, and we saw the need," explained Ward Gabeline. "We couldn't have done it without everyone else, and we couldn't have done it without cell phones."

President Bush To Make Stop In Iowa

By Danny Davis

According to a recent White House press briefing President Bush will be making a stop to view the devastation in Iowa and the rest of the Midwest.

Although it's not quite clear where the President will make his stop, the White House says the recent disaster is a major concern for the President.

"It's absolutely a concern, and something that we're going to be paying close attention to. We've been paying very close attention to food prices and agriculture, crop prices for a number of months now with what we've seen with prices this year. It's too early to say what the exact impact will be, it will certainly cause disruptions in terms of the food supply coming from that region. So the Agriculture Department is on top of it. They're doing their assessments. They're also waiting for the ability to be able to go into these areas and try to make determinations as to what the crop production would be," stated White House Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto.

With Iowa being the number one producer of hogs, corn and soybeans, many are worried that this will increase the price of crops and food, however the White House doesn't see the connection. "Well, I don't think I'd make that connection to — that direct connection to prices. We spend a lot of time talking up here about the relationship between the prices of crops and how that affects consumer prices, and it's not a direct link. There is some relationship, but it's not very direct and it's not really one-to-one. It should have — it will probably have some impact, but there are so many forces that play upon consumer prices, it's hard to point to any one item. It's also — like I said, it's just really too early to say whether those figures are correct or not," stated Fratto.

President Bush is expected to make a stop in Iowa on Thursday.

Note: All of the below updates were current as of Mediapolis News press time Tuesday at 6 p.m.

HIGHWAY UPDATES

Flooding continues to affect many roadways in the state, according to Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) officials. Iowans are urged to closely monitor conditions and never enter a water-covered roadway.

The Iowa DOT's temporary customer service phone line will be in operation from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. daily until further notice. That number is 866-452-8510. This number was set up for assisting travelers navigate state roadway closings. It is not an emergency number. Emergency calls should be made to 911. This phone line is extremely busy, so if you get a busy signal please call back.

U.S. 136: in Lee County — The Mississippi River bridge at Keokuk is reduced to one lane with a flagger assisting traffic. Delays are to be expected. U.S. 136 is CLOSED into Missouri.

Previously mentioned and updated road closures

Interstate routes

U.S. 34: in Des Moines County — The Mississippi River bridge at Burlington is closed due to a levee breach in Gulfport, Ill.

U.S. 34: in Des Moines County — The exit ramp from U.S. 34 to Main Street (exit 263) in Burlington is closed to traffic due to flooding.

U.S. 61: in Louisa County — U.S. 61 is closed from the north city limits of Wapello to south of Iowa 92.

U.S. 61: in Lee County — The Mississippi River bridge at Fort Madison is closed due to flooding on the Iowa side.

U.S. 61: in Lee County — U.S. 61 in Lee County is closed to traffic between Lee County roads J-40 and X-38 due to water covering the road. Traffic is suggested to follow local detour signs for US 61 Fort Madison detour.

U.S. 136/U.S. 61: Lee County — U.S. 136/U.S. 61 is closed until further notice due to flooding at the Missouri state line. This closure will detour travelers between Iowa and Missouri.

Iowa 70: in Louisa County — Iowa 70 is closed to traffic from IA 92 to before Muscatine County Line due to flooding.

Iowa 92: in Louisa County — Iowa 92 is closed in Columbus Junction. Traffic is being detoured onto local roads.

Flood safety tips and other helpful information for travelers are available at: <http://iowadot.gov/floods/>

RIVER UPDATES:

With water flowing quickly into the Mississippi River from flooded Iowa rivers, several Iowa river crossings are either closed or in danger of closing.

Travelers on Interstate 80 or points north should use the Mississippi River bridges in or north of the Quad Cities. Travelers hoping to cross the Mississippi south of I-80 will need to travel to Quincy, Illinois, and use the Bayview Bridge on Illinois Route 96. The Bayview Bridge is temporarily carrying traffic in both directions. The Memorial Bridge in Quincy is closed.

Status of bridges over the Mississippi River in southeast Iowa

The U.S. 136 crossing at Keokuk is open to only local traffic. Flaggers are in place to assist motorists.

The Iowa side of the river is flooding in Fort Madison causing the U.S. 61 bridge to close.

A levee breach in Gulfport, Ill. caused the U.S. 34 bridge at Burlington, Iowa, bridge to close.

While the Iowa 92 bridge in Muscatine is open, portions of the roadway south of the city and along the riverfront are closed due to flooding. Iowa 22 east of Muscatine is also closed, making it difficult to reach destinations beyond Muscatine.

