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Iowa River crests at 28.9 feet, an all-time record

Floods ravage area

Louisa County residents this week found themselves battling a record crest of the Iowa River, with volunteers working around the clock in valiant attempts to

save levees protecting farmland, residential, and business properties throughout the Iowa River basin.

smaller streams and tributaries also wrecked havoc with Louisa County crops.

The floods brought back memories of long days and nights

spent on the levees in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

The record crests were a result of extremely heavy weekend rains that fell in the east central and southeastern portions of the state—the area of the state drained by the Iowa and Cedar Rivers.

The spring has been very wet in Louisa County, with well above normal rainfall recorded in March, May and June. Wapello received 2.65 inches of rain over the weekend, with an additional 1.34 inches falling up to mid-afternoon on Tuesday. Area farmers reported as much as four inches of rainfall over the weekend.

Extremely heavy rainfall fell over the weekend in a band some 50 to 100 miles north of Louisa County, with Tipton recording over seven inches of rain and Coralville receiving nearly five inches.

With topsoil already near the saturation point, the rains, which came in spurts over a relatively short period of time, sent small streams and ditches over their banks almost immediately. That water quickly found its way into the Iowa and Cedar Rivers.

The river crested at approximately 3 a.m. Tuesday morning in Wapello, with a water level reading of 28.9 feet, setting an all-time record.

Despite the efforts of many volunteers led by members of the Wapello Fire Department and area farmers, a levee in section 18 of Jefferson Township gave way at about 4 a.m. Tuesday morning, allowing flood waters into hundreds of acres of cropland east and southeast of Wapello.

High waters also caused Highway 61 north of Wapello to be closed for some 14 hours Monday night and Tuesday morning, required sandbagging of Highway 92 in Columbus Junction, and covered the Louisa County Fairgrounds in Columbus Junction with several feet of water.

The full extent of the damage to Louisa County crops, homes, municipal utilities, and businesses cannot be accurately assessed until the flood waters recede.

For disaster assistance, phone

1-800-462-9029

Monday-Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mary Gieselman, Director of Disaster Services for Louisa County, recently assembled community leaders and county officials to make preliminary assessments of the damage done by this week's flood.

Following a consultation with those attending the informal meeting, Gieselman elected to request that Iowa Governor Terry Branstad declare Louisa County a disaster area, thereby making state assistance available.

Gieselman reported late Tuesday that the Governor indicated that the request would be granted.

Preliminary estimates of property damage in Louisa County placed that damage at over \$2 million. That figure does not include damage to county crops.

Wendell Jones, district conservationist with the Louisa County Soil Conservation Service, estimated that 35,000 acres of Louisa County land was covered Tuesday by flood waters, with approximately 23,000 of those acres consisting of cropland.

Heavy rainfall Tuesday night hinders flood fight, additional levee break reported

Nearly four inches of rain fell in the Louisa County area Tuesday evening, further compounding flooding difficulties experienced by area farmers, businesses, municipalities and homeowners.

In Columbus Junction, water went over a levee surrounding the Columbus Motel, forcing the evacuation of the motel. The levee did not break, however, as water levels dropped following a break in the levee southeast of Wapello.

Some evacuations on Locust Street in Columbus Junction took place Tuesday night, as water from Short Creek flooded the area.

In the Wapello-Oakville area, workers who had spent some 36 hours of back-breaking effort attempting to save a cross levee separating levee districts 8 and 11 were unable to save the levee, with that levee giving way at approximately 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon. An estimated 6-8000 additional farm acres were flooded after the break.

According to preliminary reports from the Louisa County Sheriff's Office, most roads in the county remained open, although G62 west of Columbus City was reported closed, and there was one-way traffic on a portion of Highway 61 north of Wapello.

The weather bureau, early Wednesday morning, predicted a secondary crest on the Iowa River at Wapello late on Wednesday of 28.5 feet, just .4 foot under the record 28.9 crest early Tuesday morning.

Extension Service has publications on flood cleanup

Louisa County has experienced some of the wettest weather in thirty years this spring. To help deal with the wet weather, the Louisa County Extension Service has articles and publications that may help many families reduce the labor and time required to get homes and farm buildings back into condition after a flood.

Anyone with flood recovery problems is invited to phone 523-2371 or stop at the Cooperative Extension Service office in Wapello for any of these articles or publications. This information deals with problems related to contaminated food, replanting decisions and herbicide use, damaged grain and wet hay, and checking engines, appliances, electric lines, heating systems, furniture, bedding, and of course wells.

Body found in Mississippi River

The identity of a body found by the Oakville Rescue Unit in Blackhawk Chute on the Mississippi River east of Oakville has been confirmed as that of a missing Moline, Ill., woman, Mary L. Kirkpatrick, 64.

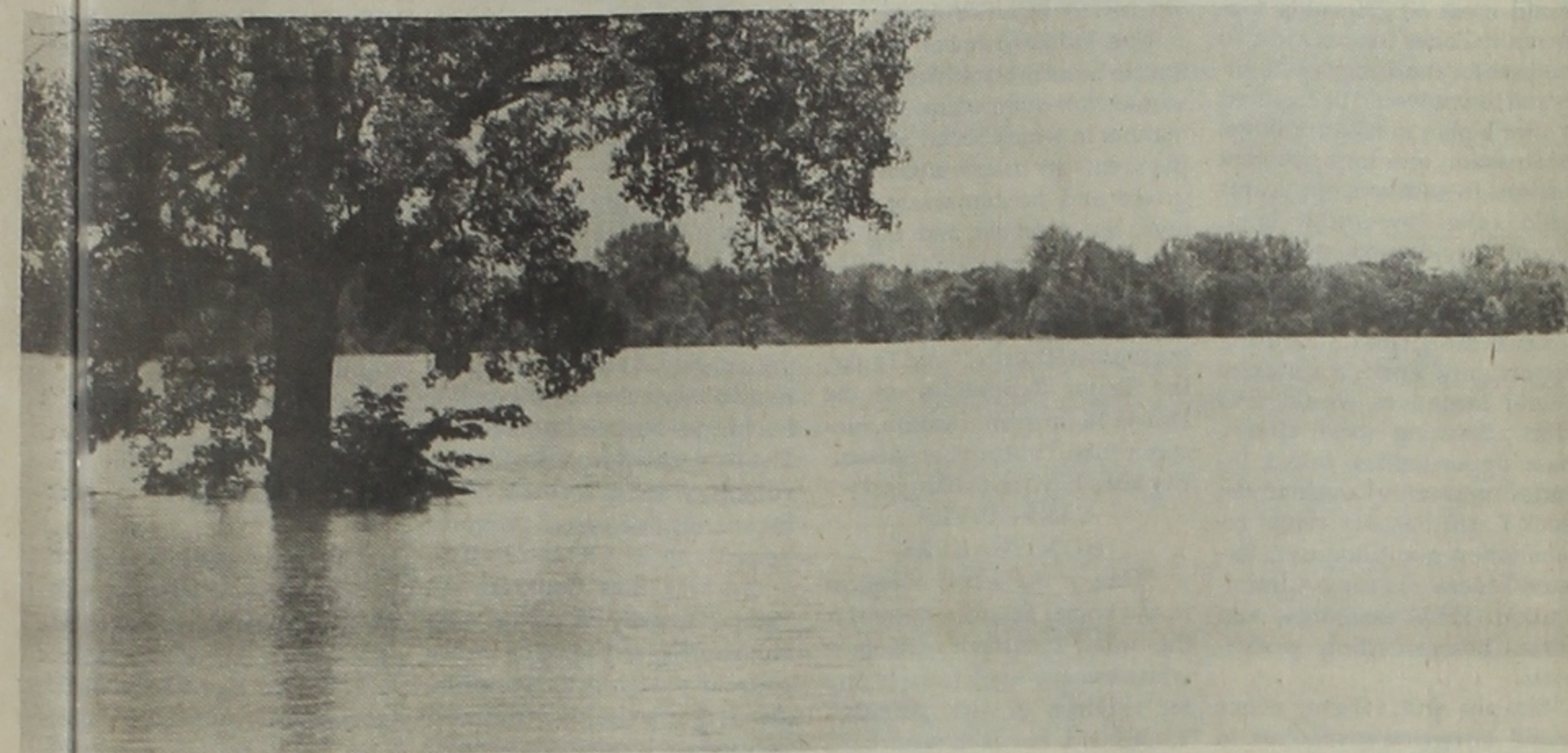
The body was recovered after Mercer Co., Ill., officials received a report from a fisherman. Mercer County authorities contacted the Louisa County Sheriff's Department, who dispatched the Oakville Rescue Unit to the scene.

Oakville Rescue Unit spokesman Steve Metcalf noted that the body was found in a brush pile about 100 yards north of the Trans-action Railroad bridge.

Kirkpatrick had been reported missing to Moline Police on June 10.

The incident remains under investigation by Moline Police.

Morning Sun City Council



A lone cottonwood shows its head over the Iowa River flood waters north of Wapello.

Wapello School Board

Salary increases approved for administrators

The Wapello School Board approved 4% salary hikes for school administrators. Earlier on Tuesday, the Wapello and Morning Sun boards had met in a joint session and decided on the 4% increase for shared Supt. Fran Davis. His salary will go from \$55,012 to \$57,275. He will continue to receive housing from the Morning Sun district and vehicle use from Wapello.

Under the agreement, Morning Sun will continue to pay 40% of Davis' salary while Wapello will pay 60%.

Salaries for elementary principal Larry Dossett and junior high principal Bill Denning were also increased 4% by the Wapello board.

Dossett's salary will be \$43,111; while Denning will receive \$17,957 for his administrative duties. Denning also receives \$20,45 for teaching responsibilities.

The increased salaries will be effective July 1, 1990.

In other action, the board approved the resignations of Tim Jobe, band director; Chuck Reigard, athletic director and math and Patty Hardin, part-time library and aide.

The board also approved hiring several new people, including Jane Lauer, part-time Spanish teacher.



The Louisa County Fairgrounds were covered by several feet of water after a levee broke on Monday.

