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Rain floods Janesville streets, but Rock River levels are steady

SARAH ZIMMERMANN
June 15, 2015



SARAH ZIMMERMANN

A sign warns drivers to be careful of standing water at the intersection of Mount Zion Avenue and North Livingston Street in Janesville on Monday morning.

JANESVILLE—Residents can expect more rain later this week, a meteorologist said Monday, but they don't yet need to worry about the Rock River flooding.

“As far as river flooding, there are no immediate threats on the horizon,” said Ben Herzog, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service

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in Sullivan.

“During a period where we have gotten so much rain, it could become a concern, but as of right now, it is not.”

So far, precipitation for June is running about average.

Janesville has received about 3.6 inches of rain so far in June. The average June total is 4.2 inches, according to Gazette weather records.

In May, Janesville had 4.5 inches of rain, about one inch above average.

When it rains in Janesville, the water eventually ends up in the Rock River. The ground absorbs some of it during dry periods, but if the ground is saturated, more water runs into the river, Herzog said.

The forecast calls for a chance of rain through this week and into next week, Herzog said. While he doesn't see a flooding threat for the Rock River, Herzog said people need to be aware that heavy rain can produce flash flooding.

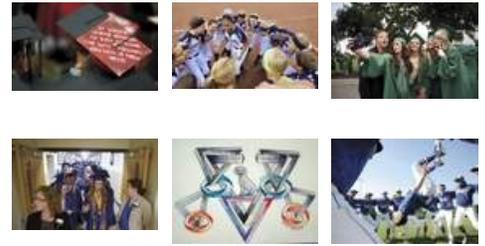
In flash flood situations, drivers should be cautious and avoid driving through standing water.

“It doesn't take much water to sweep your car away,” he said. “Be aware of your surroundings.”

People driving on Mount Zion Avenue in Janesville on Monday morning might have noticed water pooling in the road. The stretch of Mount Zion Avenue from Randall Avenue to Memorial Drive floods more often than other areas of the city, said Kamron Nielson, Janesville assistant operations director.

Heavy rain also can prompt the Rock County Sheriff's Office to designate a slow/no wake zone on the Rock River.

Slow/no wake means boaters should operate at the slowest speed possible while still being able to steer their boats, said Christopher Krahn, recreational patrol deputy for the Rock County Sheriff's



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Slow/no wake is enforced when the water level is 8.0 feet and above from Lake Koshkonong to the Indianford Dam, Krahn said. The lake's current water level is 6.76 feet, he said.

From the Indianford Dam to the Beloit-Rock Townline Bridge, water levels must be at 6.5 feet and above to enforce the slow/no wake rule. As of Monday, the Afton gauge said the river was at 5.98 feet.

Slow/no wake is intended to protect shoreline property owners from water damage, Krahn said.

"When the water is high, it can go on people's property," Krahn said. The slow/no wake rule "helps protect landowners from erosion."

The last time the rule was enforced was April 15 to May 3, he said.

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