

Rock River crests in Jefferson

From Jefferson Daily Union , June 4, 2004

JEFFERSON — Dry weather during the past week with more in the forecast is good news for flooded-out residents of Jefferson County .

According to Rudy Schaar, meteorologist for the National Weather Service at Sullivan, water levels in the northern portions of the Rock and Crawfish rivers are receding, and have crested in Watertown , Jefferson and Milford .

“So far, the water levels are below flood stage at Waupun and Horicon and teetering at flood stage in Watertown ,” said Schaar.

The Rock River crested at 11.51 feet at Jefferson late Wednesday afternoon, but Schaar warned that water levels will be slow going down.

“ Jefferson is a broad crest and it has only come down about one-tenth of a foot in the last 24 hours,” he said. “Water levels are going down very slowly, and once you get past Jefferson , Fort Atkinson is still rising slightly or holding steady.”

Water levels are not expected to dip below flood stage late next week.

“The river will remain above bank-full for quite a while,” said Schaar.

While official figures are not available yet, Schaar said the National Weather Service broke records for May rainfall at gauging stations throughout southeastern Wisconsin . The region received anywhere from one to six inches of rain above previous records.

Floodwaters continue to threaten homes, county roadways and properties throughout southern Jefferson County, and while the rivers are at or approaching crest stage, currents are still dangerously swift and authorities are urgently requesting that parents continue to warn their children about the dangers the high waters pose.

“We have responded to several reports and initiated contact with kids we've found playing and around the river,” said Fort Atkinson Police Chief Tony Brus.

Brus said parents should be warning their children that the river is extremely dangerous and they should keep clear.

“Any assistance from parents in advising their children to stay away from the river would be appreciated by the police,” Brus said.

In Milwaukee , searchers recovered the body of one of two sisters lost when they were swept away by the swift moving currents of the Milwaukee River on May 23, and police and emergency management officials stress that they do not want a repeat of the tragic incident.

The American Red Cross opened a shelter at St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Tuesday at the intersection of Merchants Avenue and South Third Street in Fort Atkinson to accommodate families unable to live in their homes due to flooding. (The full story appears in the June 4 Daily Union .)

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