



INSIDE TODAY

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The Rise At Riverside

Yankton Officials Believe Park Should Weather River Flooding

BY NATHAN JOHNSON nathan.johnson@yankton.net

Although the City of Yankton has taken some precautions in Riverside Park because of high flows along the Missouri River, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Larson said plans are to operate it as normal this summer.

"Based on information that comes through the (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and then goes through our city engineers, it is business as usual in Riverside Park," he stated.

Flooding is not expected in the park due to releases at Gavins Point Dam.

In the boat ramp area, the floating docks have been pulled out of the water because of the force of the current. Because the river is closed to boat traffic, the entire boat ramp has been cordoned off.

The ADA-accessible pier on the west side of the park is now under water, and a nearby floating dock may be taken out of the river so it doesn't get carried downstream. Access to both structures has been restricted.

"The only question we don't know, and which is the same up and down the river, is what happens with erosion," Larson said. "Will it start to eat away at the bank and cause it to fall in? In that case, we've got a different situation, and we would treat it just like erosion areas along Marne Creek where we fence stuff off."

Unless that happens, there are no current plans to erect an orange fence or any other type of barrier along the shore.

Larson said he hopes people follow the long-standing city ordinance that prohibits swimming or wading in the Missouri River at Riverside Park.

"Hopefully, people have the common sense to know they should not swim or wade in the water now that it is at record highs and the current is much faster," he stated.

"We just don't know when or where erosion may be happening, so when it comes to getting too close to



A woman in Yankton's Riverside Park Wednesday sits on a bench and watches the swollen Missouri River flowing by. The rising river has submerged a floating dock (pictured) and an ADA-accessible pier located at the southwest corner of the park. Based on current river projections, city officials believe the park will not go under water and that summer activities planned at the park can go on as planned.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D



Water is shown rushing out of Gavins Point Dam (as seen from atop the spillway) Thursday afternoon. Releases from the dam are expected to climb to 150,000 cubic feet per second Tuesday.

SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D

Sandbagging Operations Are Suspended In Yankton

From P&D Staff Reports

Sandbag filling operations in Yankton have been suspended after volunteers, South Dakota National Guard soldiers, South Dakota Department of Corrections inmates and Federal Bureau of Prisons inmates filled nearly 425,000 sandbags in 11 days, it was announced Thursday.

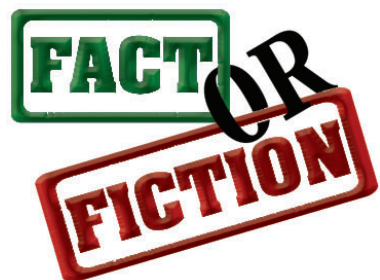
A majority of the sandbags were handed out to local residents whose property was threatened by rising Missouri River levels, but approximately 100,000 filled sandbags remain in a

strategic reserve at three locations in the area.

South Dakota residents who still have a need for sandbags can self-load from stockpiles at the south end of Deer Boulevard or at Dakota Premium Hay.

Sandbag filling operations may be re-established if these reserves fall below a comfort level or a change in the flooding threat occurs.

The Yankton County Office of Emergency Management says it is continuing to monitor releases at Gavins Point Dam, and the impact the higher water is having on affected properties.



Corps Says Dams Are In Good Shape

The Press & Dakotan's "Fact or Fiction" series is an attempt to clarify questions surrounding Missouri River flooding.

By checking with federal, state and local authorities, as well as other resources, we hope to give you the best answers to your questions as possible.

If you have a question or concern about the flood that you want clarified, send the question to: Fact or Fiction, c/o Nathan Johnson, PO Box 56, Yankton, SD 57078; or email the question to news@yankton.net.

QUESTION: Are the dams along the Missouri River structurally sound?

ANSWER: Colonel Robert Ruch (pronounced Rook), the commander of the Omaha district for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stresses during a teleconference held daily with national, state and local officials, as well as journalists, that the mainstem dams along the Missouri River are structurally sound.

"There's been a rumor every day (of problems with the dams)," he said Thursday. "You get calls in from the public that they heard this or that. I think the local and state officials have been doing a great job tamping them down."

"I have seen every dam this week — some of them operating at 150,000 cubic feet per second (cfs)," Ruch continued. "They are operating magnificently."

He said there is danger in misinformation circulating about the dams.

"That's one of the reasons we conduct this call every evening, so we can get the proper information out to the press, local governments and the public," Ruch said.

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C-Battery Reveals In Homefront Work

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE shauna.marlette@yankton.net

For a few days this past week, members of Yankton's Charlie Battery, First Battalion, 147th Field Artillery unit were summoned for a unique service of duty: The South Dakota National Guard soldiers were called home to help with flood preparations in Yankton.

On May 27 the initial National Guard flood response, which included Charlie Battery, was directed to the cities of Pierre and Ft. Pierre. So, when the members of the unit were informed last week that they were being reassigned to Yankton, it was a very welcome — if unique — set of orders.

"For what we are doing here in Yankton, I think we are returning the favor," said Staff Sergeant Leslie Kirchner. "(This community) has done so much for us when we have been deployed. I guess this to me is what the Guard really is. When I signed up for the guard, my intent was to serve my country and my state; this is our

duty and our job. I am proud that we are able to do our job for our town and our home community."

For the more than 150 soldiers who make up Charlie Battery, that opportunity to give back was welcomed with open arms.

"It was great to help Pierre and Fort Pierre," Kirchner said. "As far as I know, we did an awesome job, and we kept up pace and put out as many sandbags for them as we could, as well. At the same point, we were glad to come back and help Yankton, and they really have been treating us well. The community has been amazing. We can't ask for anything more than they have done for us. We really appreciate it."

Staff Sgt. Ben Gunther agreed, although he did admit it felt a bit surreal to be putting on the uniform to serve in the Yankton community.

"After the various deployments over-

GUARD | PAGE 12A



SHAUNA MARLETTE/P&D

Members of Yankton's Charlie Battery, First Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, got the chance to lend a helping hand in their hometown this week as they were assigned to Yankton to aid in flood assistance activities. The unit was activated late last month and sent to the Pierre-Fort Pierre area. The guardsmen have now been deployed to the Wynstone area near Dakota Dunes.

Americans' Equity In Homes Near Record Low

BY DEREK KRAVITZ AND CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON — Falling real estate prices are eating away at home equity.

The percentage of their homes that Americans own is near its lowest point since World War II, the Federal Reserve said Thursday. The average homeowner now has 38 percent equity, down from 61 percent a decade ago.

The latest bleak snapshot of the housing market came as mortgage rates hit a new low for the year, falling below 4.5 percent for a 30-year fixed loan. But even alluring rates have failed to deliver any lift to the depressed housing industry.

The Fed report is based on data from the first quarter of this year. Another report last week found that home prices in big cities have fallen to 2002 levels.

Normally, home equity rises as you pay off the mortgage. But home values have fallen dramatically since the bubble in prices burst in 2006. So many homeowners are losing equity even though the outstanding balance on the

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TOMORROW: New MMC President Prepares To Take Reins

