



### THE FLOODS OF 2008

**25,000:** Ordered out of C.R. homes  
**12,000:** Remain without power in C.R.  
**\$376 million:** Damage to city homes

**C.R. drinking water:** In great peril  
**2,500 Guardsmen:** Deployed in Iowa  
**16 counties:** To receive federal aid

# WHAT NOW?



Courtesy Target/The Gazette

## C.R. struggles to grasp losses

By Adam Belz  
The Gazette

**C**EDAR RAPIDS — The Cedar River crested at 31.1 feet a little after 1:30 p.m. Friday and slowly began to recede, but Cedar Rapids is still reeling.

Damage is easily in the many hundreds of millions of dollars. Drinking water is severely threatened. The downtown is covered in water. Interstate 380 is closed south of the city. Roughly 25,000 people have been ordered to evacuate their homes. About 12,000 were still without power as of Friday.

Barring significant rains, the floodwaters should recede in 10 days, by June 24, according to the National Weather Service.

Property in Cedar Rapids valued at \$736 million is directly affected by the flood, and some \$376 million of that is damage to people's homes, said Dave Koch, spokesman for the Cedar Rapids Fire Department.

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### Online

■ Get breaking news, view photo galleries and see aerial video of Cedar Rapids flooding at [www.GazetteOnline.com](http://www.GazetteOnline.com)

### Inside

- Sandbaggers save C.R. water supply, **4A**
- Iowa City split in two, **5A**
- Maquoketa rages through Jones County, **1B**
- C.R. businesses wait, worry, **10B**

Fast water rushing down J Street in southwest Cedar Rapids on Friday. The Cedar River crested at 31.1 feet and slowly began to recede.

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Coralville resident Karen Near Creek cover Highway 91 apartment after the flood broke Friday, and additional



No confirmed deaths or serious injuries have been linked to the flood, though one woman in southwest Cedar Rapids was found dead in her basement, which had water in it, on Friday. Hundreds of people have been rescued by boat, Koch said.

It could easily take weeks for the Cedar Rapids water system to return to normal, and if people don't further restrict usage, the city will have to issue a boil order.

Some areas may lose water pressure altogether, Pat Ball,



**Pat Ball**  
Water Pollution Control facility director

of the city's Water Pollution Control office, said at a 10 a.m. news conference at the Linn County Emergency Operations Center.

"We are at a very critical stage," he said, imploring

people to use water sparingly. "We are still consuming more water than we are able to supply the system with."

The boil order would become necessary if water pressure drops far enough because then "we can't guarantee that there hasn't been contamination," Ball said.

The city is pumping clean water at 25 percent capacity after most municipal wells were overtaken by floodwater. All major industries are shut down, Ball said.

One major well — near Edgewood Road and Ellis Road SW — was supplying almost all the water for the city, he said. (See related story, 4A.)

"We're looking at a week, and possibly longer, for anything to get even close to back to normal," Ball said.

The Interstate 380 bridge over the flooding Iowa River was closed at 6 p.m., shutting the interstate in both directions between the North Liberty and Swisher interchanges. The closure will last for at least a week, officials said. In 1993, when river levels were far below what they are now, that bridge was closed for about two weeks.

Highway 30 east of Cedar Rapids remains closed. And Highway 965 also is flooded, effectively cutting off major routes between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City.

As of Friday afternoon, more than 12,000 Alliant Energy customers in Linn County were without power, plus 1,000 in Johnson County and 3,800 in Cedar County. Outages may last more than a week.

Power was back on at St. Luke's Hospital and Mercy Medical Center on Friday, Alliant Vice President Vern Gebhart said.

Last night, 16 counties — including Black Hawk, Delaware, Buchanan and Butler — had been declared federal disaster areas. Gov. Chet Culver expected Linn and John-

Money, water, food, home grants coming

By Steve Gravelle  
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The message went out Friday from officials at every level of government to flood-weary Eastern Iowans: You're not in this alone. Help is on the way.

"Despite the suffering and the pain and the challenges, we are united," Gov. Chet Culver told a media audience shortly after noon in Cedar Rapids. "Every member of the team here is contributing to this effort."

The news conference at the Linn County Emergency Operations Center at Kirkwood Community College followed a closed briefing that included representatives from county, state and federal government agencies, as well as non-profits such as the American Red Cross.

"We're making do the best we can," Mayor Kay Ballorin told the assembled officials. "We're hoping for any and all help we can get."

David Paulison, administrator of the Federal Emer-

gency Management Agency, said even experienced hands are affected by what they've seen this week, but that's just spurring their efforts on.

"I don't care how many times you see that and how many disasters you go to, it always breaks your heart," Paulison said.

But Iowa's response "has all worked like it's supposed to work," Paulison said. "We can use this state as an example of how it's supposed to work."

Paulison said FEMA had shipped in 750,000 liters of bottled water by midday Friday, with more on route. "Three semi-trailer truck loads of military meals ready-to-eat are also on the way, and the Iowa National Guard will set up portable shower stations next week.

"Water and food will be provided," Culver said.

Federal aid began moving to the 16 Iowa counties included in Friday morning's residential disaster declaration, and the same will happen as more counties are added. The disaster declaration for Linn and Johnson counties is expected at any time.



**David Paulison**  
FEMA administrator



**Adj. Gen. Ron Dardis**  
Iowa National Guard

Paulison said the assistance will include grants of up to \$20,800 to homeowners who don't have flood insurance. "Congress doesn't have to pass anything new for most of the immediate needs," U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley said.

That will include loans and further grants to help Iowans rebuild their homes and lives. "We've been through it before and we'll get through this time," Grassley said. "Just work with us."

The Iowa Individual Assistance program is also available to compensate residents for flood-related expenses. Culver instructed residents to call (877) 937-3663 and to "document everything, from a hotel lodging bill to, perhaps,

food and lodging."

The program also can be accessed online at [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

Despite the scale of the contaminant-laced flooding in Iowa, Paulison doesn't expect widespread health problems. As in past cases, agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency are already undertaking aggressive preventive measures.

U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin said Iowa's troubled spring and summer could contribute toward a global food-supply crisis this winter.

"We could be in for a rocky, rocky winter as far as food supply," Harkin said. "I don't want to be alarmed about it, (but) it's like a perfect storm in food supply. We could end up this winter with a worldwide problem." With many fields unplanted and those that have been weeks behind their usual development, the loss of Iowa's usual corn and soybean yields will further tighten markets already coping with repeated crop failures in Australia and the Ukraine.

Harkin, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said he expects state crop losses to top the \$201 million of 1993.

"I have not seen a field as I have traveled the state that has not been impacted," Harkin said.

The government-supported demand for ethanol has further heightened demand for corn, but Harkin said Congress shouldn't ease or reverse mandates for the fuel additive.

He said ethanol has helped reduce demand for gas.

"If you take the ethanol out, that's only going to make the price of gasoline go higher," he said.

Gen. Ron Dardis, commander of the Iowa National Guard, said 2,179 members had been activated by late Thursday — a number that had risen to 2,500 by day's end.

Culver noted all nine of Iowa's major river basins are expected to see record crests. "Keep up the fight," he said. "Across this state, we stand ready."

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Cedar Rapids/Water system could take weeks

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No confirmed deaths or serious injuries have been linked to the flood, though one woman in southwest Cedar Rapids was found dead in her base-

ment to follow.

More than 2,500 National Guard members have been deployed in the state, with 220 of them in Cedar Rapids and 540 in Iowa City on Friday, National Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Greg Haggood said.

Traffic on I-380 crawled through Cedar Rapids on Friday as motorists slowed to stare at the brown water churning around the ground floors of City Hall, the Linn County Courthouse and the Linn County Jail on May's Island.

Firefighters, about 14 U.S. Coast Guard personnel and animal rescue teams patrolled the streets of southwest Cedar Rapids in boats with outboard motors, rescuing people, cats, macaws and iguanas.

On First Avenue West, rescue boats kicked south in the cross-currents on Sixth and Fifth streets. Water came up to the windows of the Family Dollar store. It reached more than halfway up the door to Hacienda Las Glorias. The doors at the Maid-Rite were barely visible, and the Dairy Queen was submerged to its eaves.

On Fifth Street SW, an underground fuel tank the size of a train car was lodged between the porch and a tree in the front yard at 214 Fifth St. NW. Swift-moving water reached nearly to the tops of first-floor windows along the street.

Friday afternoon, firefighters rescued Mary Lou Conlan from her home at 420 Sixth St. SW, where she'd been marooned upstairs since Thursday morning.

Two firefighters — one holding her around the waist and the other carrying her feet — lifted her from a boat and set her down on First Avenue



The Cedar River nears its crest in Cedar Rapids shortly before noon on Friday.



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West. Conlan, who said she's "older than 70," thought the firefighters were "very nice."

She said everything on her first floor was destroyed — washer, dryer, television.

A police officer took her name and led her to a city bus up the street to wait while firefighters returned to the house for her daughter. Conlan sat alone in the bus with the air conditioner humming, her hands folded, bright sunlight streaming in behind her.

"It makes me sick," she said quietly, her lower lip trembling. "Here I am, retired. I lost everything."

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Cindy Koehler (left) and Jeremy Wagner ride down Second Avenue SW toward Cedar Rapids on Friday.



Cindy Koehler reads on her cot at the Red Cross shelter at Prairie High School in Cedar Rapids on Friday. Koehler's home of 20 years and place of work were flooded on Thursday in Cedar Rapids.