

Fort Wayne Battles On

Below and pages 4A, 5A, 1B, 2B

The News-Sentinel

Area Edition

Showers, mild
Low tonight: 42
High tomorrow: 52
Details on page 2A

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Worst Floods In History

Lake becomes lake



Photo: Mike Hanley/The News-Sentinel

Sandbaggers work hastily today to keep a break in the street at Lake and Randalia contained a stretch 325 feet in front of

Lakeside Middle School. The lake on Lake was formed when water backed through a 72-inch storm sewer.

Added rains to raise water over record

From Staff Reports

Battered city officials and homeowners braced themselves today for what is now expected to become the worst flood in Fort Wayne history.

With eyes cast toward the menacing skies, city officials worked to correct problems caused by water seeping under existing dikes and issued yet another plea for sandbag volunteers as water problems worsened.

Mayor Winfield Moses today said official estimates of total damage have now reached \$16.3 million, surpassing the 1978 flood damage of \$11 million. City officials estimate 13 percent of the city is now under water.

Thunderstorms followed by light rain passed through the Fort Wayne vicinity early today, dumping about a half inch of rain in the area. The rain stopped by midmorning, but forecasters were predicting the possibility of a similar storm entering the area later today or early Wednesday.

New rainfall will complicate matters as officials and volunteers continue the battle against the rising rivers. A spokesman for the National Weather Service at Baer Field said the half inch of rain will likely see the Maumee River rise an additional six inches, bringing it closer to the record flood stage.

At 8 a.m. today, the Maumee was measured at 24.89 feet, almost 10 feet above what is considered flood stage. It was expected to level off at about 25.5 feet by afternoon, precariously close to the 26-foot record set during the flood of 1913. The NWS said the river may reach record flood levels by Thursday or Friday.

The St. Marys River at Decatur was measured at 20.95 feet and officials said it was steadily falling. But as the St. Marys steadily falls, the St. Joseph River steadily rises. At 9 a.m., the St. Joseph was at a record-setting 17.7 feet, about 2 feet above flood level. Rising waters will continue on the northeast side of Fort Wayne and in northeastern Allen County.

The forecast calls for it to be

More on Great Flood

■ Aerial photos show the extent of Fort Wayne's flooding. Page 4A

■ Floods continue to drive people in Indiana and Ohio from their homes. Page 5A

■ The flood's effect on some businesses will be catastrophic. Page 1B

■ People who talk about the 1913 flood know how devastating it was, old photos show. Page 2B

mostly cloudy tonight with a chance of thundershowers. The chance of rain tonight and Wednesday is 30 percent. There could be some more trouble on the way, however.

NWS forecasters are closely watching a frontal system developing in Nebraska. This morning they said there is a possibility the system could move into the Fort Wayne area late today or early Wednesday and bring with it thundershowers and possibly another half inch of rain.

The additional half inch would be enough to bring the Maumee above the record flood level.

"At this point, we don't know for sure what the system is going to do," the NWS spokesman said. "But anytime you see thundershowers developing, there is that possibility we will get hit by them."

While city officials faced the glum prospects of more rain and flooding, they also wrestled with staving off problems caused by the water already here.

Water seeping under dikes in the Lakeside area forced a stretch of Lake Avenue, near Randalia Drive,

Turn to FLOOD/Page 5A

Residents keeping constant watch as flood converts Lake Avenue into real-life lake

By BILL ZLATOS
Of The News-Sentinel

Frank Yeranko arose at 5 this morning to find his neighborhood living up to its name.

Yeranko, his wife Kendyle and their children, Jason, 9, and Erin, 5, in a stone and white-wood house trimmed in red on 1501 Randalia. The 40-year-old home is in the Lakeside neighborhood.

Alarmed by a half-inch rainfall, Yeranko was up every two or three hours during the night to check on his basement. By 5 a.m., his basement started to flood and a "lake" began forming at the intersection of Lake and Randalia in front of his house.

About four hours later, the lake stretched 325 feet in front of Lakeside Middle School — closed for the second straight day — and was nearly 3 feet deep.

The Yerankos have lived in the house five years and survived the flood of 1978. Then they had two or three inches of water in their basement compared to the four or five inches they pumped out this morning.

During both floods, the overflow of the Maumee River spilled behind Lakeside Middle School. But, said Yeranko, pointing out his front door, "we didn't have all this water out here."

An assistant principal at Shaw-

nee Middle School, Yeranko took a day off in the event he had to evacuate his family. Having seen pictures of flooded cars in the newspapers, he already has moved his 1982 Mustang three blocks. But as his children gaze through an eight-foot-wide picture window to observe the sandbagging operation 50 feet from their house, Yeranko surmised, "It doesn't look too good right now."

Directing the operation to save the homes of the Yerankos and their neighbors is District 9 Fire Chief Ronald Brown. About 9:15 a.m., he shifted volunteers sandbagging in front of the school to Randalia. These were reinforced

by 26 Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets from Concordia Lutheran High School.

"We're trying to keep this water from getting into the houses," he explained, pointing towards the Yerankos' home with a walkie-talkie. Brown said the lake was formed when flood waters backed up through a six-foot storm sewer.

He said the department is pumping the water at the intersection at 1,250 gallons a minute into the overflow behind the school. When a pump with a capacity of 5,000 gallons a minute arrives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, he predicted the city would have the expanding lake under control.

Russians announce nuke missile freeze

MOSCOW (UPI) — President Leonid Brezhnev today announced a unilateral freeze on new medium-range nuclear missiles in the European part of the Soviet Union and said some missiles now in place will be removed this year.

Brezhnev warned, however, that if the United States deploys new Pershing-2 and Cruise missiles in Europe, the Kremlin will retaliate with a new generation of nuclear weapons capable of hitting U.S. targets.

In Washington, presidential aide Edwin Meese compared Brezhnev's proposal with a football game in which one team is leading by 50-0 and calling for a freeze in the score.

"Last year on the 18th of November, the President said he would not deploy any nuclear weapons in Europe if the Soviets would reduce their weaponry down to zero," Meese said on ABC's "Good Morning America" program.

"And that's not what Mr. Brezhnev came up with, obviously. Now what he's talking about is a situation where two-thirds of the way through a football game, one side is ahead 50 to 10 or 50 to nothing as it would be in this case, and then they want to freeze the score for the rest of the game," Meese said.

"That's not exactly a fair kind of thing or something that would be in the interest of the people in Europe."

Brezhnev's surprise announcement at the Congress of Soviet Trade Unions came as the Soviet

President Reagan said the Soviets have deployed 300 new SS-20 medium-range missiles in the past 4 months and are planning to install another 150.

"The Soviet leadership has taken a decision to introduce, unilaterally, a moratorium on the deployment of medium-range nuclear armaments in the European part of the USSR," Brezhnev announced.

"We are freezing, in both the quantitative and qualitative respects, the armaments of this kind already stationed here, and are suspending the replacement of old missiles, known as the SS-4 and SS-5, by newer SS-20 missiles."

He promised the moratorium would remain in effect "until either an agreement is reached with the United States to reduce ... the medium-range nuclear weapons designed for use in Europe, or until the time, if and when, U.S. leaders, disregarding the security of the nations, actually go over to practical preparations to deploy Pershing-2 and Cruise missiles in Europe."

Jury convicts von Bulow

NEWPORT RI (AP) — A jury today found Swedish Claus C. von Bulow guilty of twice trying to murder his first wife, by injecting her



Photo: Associated Press

Mayor Winfield Moses and Indiana Gov. Robert Orr discuss Monday the flooding in Fort Wayne that has left 3,000 people homeless. Orr announced that \$1 million to aid low income

flood victims would be released following an aerial survey of the damage. In the background, firemen pump sewer water back to the river.

Orr wades in for a long look

By CHARLENE MIREES
Of The News-Sentinel

On West Main Street Monday afternoon, the air was chilly, waves lapped against the pavement and the main event was the rowboat rescue of dogs and cats left behind in flooded homes.

But the unexpected sideshow was a motorcade of four state police cars, a National Guard bus, and the governor of the state of Indiana, prepared with galoshes and rolled-up trousers to inspect the devastation of the Nebraska neighborhood.

Gov. Robert D. Orr flew to Fort Wayne Monday afternoon by helicopter, followed by another helicopter full of Indianapolis reporters and photographers. He spent two hours inching through rush-hour traffic to view the areas hardest hit.

"We could always take action without being here, but there isn't anything to bring it home to you like actually taking a look," Orr said during a news conference after his tour. The governor already had declared Allen County a disaster area.

Orr mingled with Nebraska residents, did a little wading in the swamped Lakeside area of Pemberton Drive and announced a federal aid program for low-income families with flood-damaged homes.

He saw the lake which in drier times is known as Foster Park; he saw boats gliding across West Main Street; he saw a sign at the flooded Historic Fort Wayne: "When We Dry Out, Watch Us Grow."

At the intersection of Pemberton Drive and Cody Avenue, he watched eight firefighters pumping water out

of the overloaded storm sewers to flow back into swollen rivers.

Mayor Winfield Moses, a Democrat, was not officially invited along on the Republican governor's tour. But he showed up at the airport anyway and rode in the bus with reporters and photographers, acting as tour guide of his troubled city.

He carried, rolled tightly in his hand, a resolution for the governor which estimated the total flood damage at \$16.3 million.

The bus jolted along Spy Run Avenue, where sandbags were piled four deep to keep water from blocking the road. It would be worse, Moses said, if more dikes had not been built after flooding in 1978.

"But these dike levels were made for a 1978 type flood," he said. "And we're a lot different now."

Reading Guide

Marion Mystique: How Giants win

Marion High School is a perennial Giant in the Fort Wayne semi-state basketball tournament. They'll be here Saturday. Steve Warden examines the Marion Mystique and talks to coach Bill Green. SPORTS

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Today's Chuckle

Retirement is that marvelous time when the sun rises and you don't.