

Mostly cloudy
Low tonight: 43
High tomorrow: 57
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The News-Sentinel

Area Edition

149th Year, No. 65

48 Pages, 4 News Sections

Fort Wayne, Indiana / Wednesday, March 17, 1982

Telephone: 461-8222 Circulation: 423-1648
Classified Advertising: 461-8211

25 Cents

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More make sad decisions to leave

By CHARLENE MIREs and PETE FULLAM
Of The News-Sentinel

In the flood-threatened pockets of land where the St. Joseph and St. Marys rivers meet to form the Maumee, thousands of people were making sad decisions this morning about what to save and what to leave behind.

More than 4,000 people were asked to leave their homes as the St. Joseph and Maumee began seeping through dikes into the Lakeside, Lawton Park, Pemberton and Northside neighborhoods. They moved furniture upstairs, packed food and loaded cars, in anticipation of utility service cuts at noon.

"I always felt safe over here," said Mildred Nuttle, a Lakeside resident within a block of the St. Joseph River. "I always felt sorry for the people on the other side."

Many people felt that way as they moved out of the near-northeast neighborhood bounded by the St. Joseph and the Maumee. In every recent flood, the rivers have dumped their overflow south and west, leaving Lake and its sidestreets dry.

"The other side is lower — I always thought it would go that way," said Dave McKay, 1028 Elmwood, who was loading business suits and his television set into a car.

Glen and Joyce Cooley have owned their home at 935 Rivermet Ave. for nine years. This morning, they loaded their possessions into a camper-topped pickup truck. They do not have flood insurance.

"It's so expensive," Glen Cooley said. "You figure once in a lifetime, this might happen."

The Cooleys heard about the evacuation late Tuesday night from their neighbor's grandson, who is a firefighter. "I was afraid it might fall through last night," Joyce Cooley said. "If it does, it will be like a tidal wave through here."

As people packed, Fort Wayne firefighters went door-to-door through the neighborhoods, informing people about the evacuation and offering to shut off gas lines.

"We can't make anybody move," said Capt. Ed Keller, leading one of the teams. "We don't have the authority to put anyone out of their own house." But on the narrow side streets of Lakeside, Keller's team did not meet with resistance.

They had not yet come to Steve Stetzel, constructing a makeshift sidewalk of wooden warehouse skids over the mud in front of his apartment at 1023 1/2 Lake Ave. "I've got chest waders, I got a raft, and I got a life preserver," Stetzel said. "I'm gonna stay, unless I have to go."

In a 10-block area which forms



Photo: Carl Hartup/The News-Sentinel

Hundreds of high school students went to the Allen County Memorial Coliseum today to volunteer their efforts in the battle against the

flood. Classes were canceled in the Fort Wayne Community School Corporation so that more volunteers could help.



Photo: John Stearns/The News-Sentinel

Dick Limburg and Sally Palsen, help move Kari Towns, of 1505 E. Columbia Ave., today

after the Lakeside area was ordered evacuated because of possible flooding threats.

sort of a horseshoe around North Side High School and Hefner Chevrolet, firefighters Phil Wynn and acting Lt. Darby Mast went door to door Tuesday night warning residents to evacuate.

Just a stone's throw away from the homes here, the St. Joseph River lapped at the top of its dikes.

"This is frightening, it really is," said Duke Bolenbaugh, 38, a part-time bartender and tire salesman. "We just replaced everything in our basement," he said. "The thing I'm concerned about is they're talking about a seven square mile area (to be evacuated). That's a lot of area for

police to watch if you just walk out and leave everything inside open." The streets here are lined with Cape Cod and bungalow homes interspersed with two-story homes.

Most of the lights were on and through the windows of many homes, people could be seen talking on telephones, probably making arrangements to stay with relatives.

At the corner of Charlotte and Eade avenues, a group of about 15 neighborhood residents gathered around the two firemen with questions. "Please leave your addresses," said Mast, since they had been noti-

fied of the evacuation. "How long have we got?" asked one woman. "If the thing does bust, do you think it will get into my house?" asked another man, pointing to his home.

Stanton Nawrocki, of 514 Charlotte Ave., said he probably would stay the night, but he would send his wife and daughter to his mother-in-law's apartment. "I guess, like everyone else, you don't want to lose your house — you've worked for it," said Nawrocki. "If I get through it, I don't know if I'll want to stay," he said. "It's like an auto accident, I guess. You always think it's going to happen to someone else."

Lakeside hit; Pemberton endangered

From Staff Reports

More than 4,000 Lakeside Park area residents evacuated today and conditions appear likely to worsen there as city officials fear the Pemberton Boulevard dike will crumble under the flood's pressure.

Officials feared the Pemberton dike would give way by this afternoon, which could wash away some of the homes in the immediate area.

Ice floes jamming the St. Joseph

This story was written by News-Sentinel staffer Dick Isenhour, with reports from Bill Zlatos, Bill Scott, Pete Fullam, Jerry Graff, Brian Smith, Bob Jonason, and Charlie Green.

River in DeKalb and Allen counties were also being watched by officials who feared the added pressure would threaten downstream sandbags and dikes.

City officials began the evacuations Tuesday night in the Lakeside area on the northeast side.

As the conditions worsened today, officials issued an urgent plea for more volunteer aid, asking workers to report to the Memorial Coliseum.

Fire Chief Anthony Myers said floods greater than those of 1913, when the Maumee River reached 26 feet, could divide the city into six sections. Essentially, the sections would be isolated communities.

According to the plan to be used in the event such an incident occurs, command posts would be set up in each of the sections. The command posts would be in fire stations including stations at Main and Lafayette streets, Coliseum and Parnell boulevards, 2530 E. Pontiac St., Taylor Street and Brooklyn Avenue, 5800 S. Bluffton Road; and the fire station on Reed Road.

Boundaries of the six sections would most likely be:

Section 1 — an area bounded by the Maumee and St. Marys rivers and the Trier Ditch.

Section 2 — the southwest portion of the city, bounded by the Fairfield and Harber ditches and the St. Marys River.

Section 3 — southwest, including Quimby Village. The area is bounded by the St. Marys River, McCulloch Ditch and the Robinson Creek.

Section 4 — northwest, including Hillegas Road, Illinois Road and U.S. 24, and bounded by St. Marys, and St. Joseph rivers, McCulloch Ditch and Spy Run Creek.

Section 5 — north, including Glenbrook Square. The St. Joseph

River and Spy Run Creek are main boundaries.

Section 6 — northeast, including the St. Joseph Township suburbs.

The possibility some students might get separated from their families because of the evacuation forced Fort Wayne Community Schools and local parochial schools to cancel classes today.

"Our major concern was that should the city get divided (from the floods), we might not be able to get our kids home tonight," Supt. Bill Anthis said. Anthis also noted the mayor had asked for the use of all FWCS buses to transport evacuees and volunteers, which played a part in closing schools.

If the rivers do not rise, there will probably be school Thursday. If situations continue as predicted, however, there will probably be no school, Anthis said.

Officials are keeping close tabs on the levels of the three rivers, particularly the Maumee River, which winds through the neighborhoods involved. If the river reaches a record flood stage of above 26 feet, which forecasters still predict will happen sometime Thursday morning, more flooding could occur in the area.

Affected by the evacuation are about 2,000 homes in a 20-block area including Lawton Park, Lakeside Park, Pemberton and the Northside neighborhoods. Mayor Winfield Moses, at a 9 p.m. news conference Tuesday, said city firefighters would go door-to-door, telling residents to be gone from their homes by noon today.

At that time, according to the plan, utilities would be shut off to the residences.

Meanwhile, William DuBois, spokesman for Gov. Robert Orr, said Orr likely will ask President Reagan to declare Allen County a federal disaster area after he receives a report from the federal damage assessment team later this week.

The governor's office has ordered the Indiana State Police to help local police patrol the area being evacuated today. About 25 officers were to begin patrolling an area bounded by Clinton Street, Spy Run, Vance and Nevada avenues, Parnell, Randallia and Berry streets.

The National Weather Service at Baer Field said the serious flood warning for Fort Wayne is still in effect. At 8 a.m., the Maumee River was measured at 25.88 feet and rising.

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President pitches in for cameras

By KEVIN LEININGER
Of The News-Sentinel

There he was, the most powerful man in the world, standing ankle-deep in Fort Wayne mud, his expensive navy blue suit protected from the muck by only a borrowed pair of size 11 galoshes.

President Reagan stopped briefly in Fort Wayne Tuesday afternoon to view firsthand the record floods he had seen that morning on national television. Amid cameras clicking and tape recorders rolling, Reagan smilingly endured as he passed sandbags in a line which did little to improve Fort Wayne's flood situation but probably did a lot for the President's nice-guy image.

"Take it easy until the press buses roll up, then start passing the sandbags very slowly," a Secret Service

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Photo: Mike Hanley/The News-Sentinel

President Reagan met with volunteer workers stacking sand bags at Herman Street and Sherman boulevard Tuesday as he toured the

city to view firsthand Fort Wayne's flooding problems. The President even got into the act himself, tossing a couple sandbags on the pile.

Reagan's hasty visit to see flood

By CHARLENE MIREs
Of The News-Sentinel

President Reagan rides into town on the sleek dignity of Air Force One and with the confusion of hundreds of people who precede or follow him everywhere.

Tuesday, the procession came to Fort Wayne.

Casting aside the normal tight security and careful planning of presidential visits, Reagan arrived at Baer Field late Tuesday afternoon for a hastily planned, quickly executed tour of the near-northwest sector of the city.

A 25-vehicle motorcade whisked Reagan from the airport north along I-69, now an island of concrete cutting through vast, flooded farmlands. Although Reagan's visit was not announced until late Tuesday afternoon, by the time the presi-

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Today's Chuckle

A successful politician can get in the public's eye without irritating it.