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— M A Q U O K E T A —

# SENTINEL—PRESS

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# Flood waters reach record high

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

The Maquoketa River continued to recede this week from record-setting flood levels resulting when the rain-swollen Lake Delhi upstream caused the dam to burst.

The deluge flooded thousands of acres of Delaware, Jones and Jackson County farmland and caused major damage in Hopkinton and Monticello.

Maquoketa, further downstream, was spared widespread damage due in part to a volunteer force that helped protect the city's infrastructure with two days of sandbagging operations.

No mandatory evacuations were made and there were no casualties.

The river crested at 35.26 feet at 4:40 a.m. Monday, July 26, at Maquoketa, said Lyn Medinger, Jackson County emergency management coordinator. Flood level is 24 feet.

By 8:15 p.m. Monday, the level had fallen to 32.21 feet.

The previous high water mark at Maquoketa was 34.1 feet on June 5, 2002.

With no rain in the immediate forecast, the river was expected to drop below flood stage Wednesday morning.

Officials have been monitoring the situation around the clock.

Nearly all of the damage in Jackson County was to farmland, including corn and soybean fields.

Gov. Chet Culver and 1st District U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley toured flooded areas in Maquoketa on Monday, July 26. Both praised the efforts of volunteers and said assistance will be available to those with losses.

Area farmers said the extent of the damage won't be known for some time, until they have had an opportunity to assess the damage to their crops and determine how much of the crops in flooded areas will survive.

State Sen. Roger Stewart, D-Preston, a lifelong farmer, said most soybean fields will be lost.

### Little damage to homes

The only structural damage in the Maquoketa area was to a home along Hurstville Road north of Maquoketa and one or two homes along 63rd street between Hurstville Road and U.S. 61.

Maquoketa's sewage treatment plant was shut down over the weekend and will remain offline for several days until the river returns to normal levels.

As a result, the city's wastewater is being discharged directly into the Maquoketa River, said



MSP photos by Douglas Melvold

**Tim and Tammy Block**, who reside near Lakehurst Dam at the west edge of Maquoketa, stand in floodwaters as they prepare to pull a boat carrying area officials over a flooded driveway on a tour of the dam and inundated areas on Sunday. In the boat, from front to back, are state Sen. Roger Stewart, state Rep. Tom Schueller and Maquoketa Mayor Jason Hute.

Todd Allen of Alliance Water Resources, which operates the city's water and sewage treatment utilities.

He said he has been in contact with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources regarding the situation.

Allen asked residents reduce their consumption of water, and thus wastewater, by running such appliances as clothes washers and dishwashers only when necessary.

He estimated that it will take several days for the river to drop to a level at which the treatment plant can resume processing operations.

### Ordeal began Saturday

The flooding ordeal began about noon Saturday, July 24, when Jackson County officials were notified that the Lake Delhi dam on the Maquoketa River south of Delhi had failed.

The dam is 44 miles by river from Maquoketa, according to Medinger.

With northeast Iowa inundated with torrential rains last week, the rising floodwaters from the Maquoketa River ate a 39-foot wide hole in the earthen dam and sent the impounded water rushing downstream toward the communities of Hopkinton, Monticello and Maquoketa.

Using available data, the National Weather Service in the Quad Cities ran a computer model that showed that floodwaters in Maquoketa could rise 38 feet, some 14 feet above flood stage and four feet above the previous recorded high.

Medinger and other emergency-response officials immediately started organizing a sandbagging operation. They issued a call for volunteers to come to the Maquoketa Public Works Department yard on North Main Street near the Maquoketa Municipal Electric Utility generating plant.

Starting at 12:30 p.m., more than 200 area residents showed up to volunteer to fill and

■ **FLOOD, Please turn to page 15**



The residence and barn of Betty Davis along Hurstville Road north of Maquoketa were flooded this week. Maquoketa volunteer firefighters evacuated Davis and her son, John. Davis' home was one of just two or three residences affected by the flooding.



MSP photo by Rick Sheehan

**Maquoketa Mayor Jason Hute** and Chance Jenkins take a turn at filling sandbags at the Maquoketa power plant on July 24.