

Parts of Wisconsin, Illinois recover from flooding

July 13 2017, by Ivan Moreno



Tyler Schindler, 7, wades through the flooded street in Kenosha, Wis., Wednesday morning, July 12, 2017. Heavy thunderstorms are causing travel difficulties around southern Wisconsin because of flooding. Numerous municipalities are dealing with impassable streets. (Sean Krajacic/The Kenosha News via AP)

Flooding in the Midwest closed roadways and knocked out power to thousands, including a suburban Chicago hospital that was forced to close, but residents in the Wisconsin city of Burlington appeared upbeat even as portions of streets remained submerged by water Thursday.

Four bridges over the swollen Fox River in Burlington remained closed because the waterway is 5 feet above [flood](#) stage and almost every business in the city was waiting for power to be restored. Authorities there said nearly everyone is dealing with some type of flood damage in the city of about 10,000.

Police Chief Mark Anderson called the flooding "unprecedented" but local officials and residents were grateful only properties were damaged.

"I'm the happiest person in the world," said Duane Hoerneman, 72, a lifelong Burlington resident. "Because my children are safe and because all of us are safe. It makes all the difference in the world at this point and we thank everyone for their support."

Gov. Scott Walker on Thursday declared a state of emergency in Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties because of widespread flooding. About 100 Wisconsin National Guard soldiers are in the city to help local officials with traffic control and going door-to-door to check on people. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections is also sending about 20 inmates from the Robert Ellsworth Correctional Center to help with sandbagging.



Members of Pleasant Prairie, Wis., and Somers, Wis., Fire Departments assist Mary Knoebel from her trailer during flooding in Pleasant Prairie, Wis., Wednesday, July 12, 2017. Flooding has forced the evacuation of the mobile home park in southeastern Wisconsin. (Bill Siel/The Kenosha News via AP)

Although flooding was widespread, it wasn't severe enough to warrant a large number of evacuations. Tod Pritchard at the Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center said the only evacuations he's aware of happened Wednesday at a trailer park in Kenosha County. He said it's possible some people may have "self-evacuated."

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation said roads and highways are closed throughout Racine—where Burlington is located—Kenosha, Walworth and Waukesha counties.

In suburban Chicago, Lake Forest Hospital's clinical operations were still shut down Thursday, according to a statement from Northwestern

Medicine. The statement said power at the hospital had been restored Wednesday night after the outage earlier that day. According to the statement, 70 patients were transported to Northwestern Memorial Hospital and other local facilities.

Lake County was among parts of Illinois hit hard by flooding. Earlier Wednesday, Mundelein firefighters and police officers evacuated about 25 people from an apartment building. Some senior citizens were taken away on small boats.



Parts of the streets are still submerged by Wednesday's flooding in Burlington, Wis., Thursday, July 13, 2017. Flooding in the Midwest closed roadways and knocked out power to thousands, including a suburban Chicago hospital that was forced to close, but residents in the Wisconsin city of Burlington appeared upbeat even as portions of streets remained submerged by water Thursday. (AP Photo/Ivan Moreno)

Wisconsin Republican House Speaker Robin Vos, who lives in the area and owns a factory in Burlington, said the flooding Wednesday came swiftly.

"Literally by the minute water was rising by inches," he said. "But the fact that overall, while we've had extensive damage, nobody's lost their life and nobody's been harmed other than personal property. I think that's a big victory."

Vos said his factory is without power so his workers have the day off. He said his basement had some flooding.

Because a We Energies substation is submerged in floodwater, thousands of people in the area without power may not have electricity restored until Friday afternoon.



Streets are still partially submerged by water after flooding Wednesday hit the area in Burlington, Wis., Thursday, July 13, 2017. This bicycle shop, Bob's Pedal Pusher, was among the businesses that remained without power Thursday. Flooding in the Midwest closed roadways and knocked out power to thousands, including a suburban Chicago that was forced to close. (AP Photo/Ivan Moreno)

Bob Koldeway, who owns a bicycle shop called Bob's Pedal Pusher, said water entered through every door of his business and covered his floor.

"It was just a big inconvenience and this is the time of year when people want their bikes," he said, taking a break from wiping the floor with a washcloth after power-washing it. He considered himself lucky that none of his bikes were damaged.

"If (the water) would've been higher we would've lost a lot of product,"

he said. "But I had everything off the floor and you just gotta have faith that you got good friends and family and stuff to give you a hand."

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Citation: Parts of Wisconsin, Illinois recover from flooding (2017, July 13) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-wisconsin-illinois-recover.html>

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