



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF AUGUST 4, 2008

Cedar Rapids is a vibrant urban hometown - a beacon for people and businesses that are invested in building a greater community for the next generation.

CITY MANAGER

- ✓ The Community Neighborhood meeting schedule for August is as follows:
 - Monday, August 4 7:00pm Jefferson High School auditorium, 1243 20th Street SW
 - Thursday, August 7 7:00pm Washington High School cafeteria, 2205 Forest Drive SE
 - Monday, August 18 7:00pm Jefferson High School auditorium, 1243 20th Street SW
 - Tuesday, August 19 7:00pm Washington High School cafeteria, 2205 Forest Drive SE

CIVIL RIGHTS

- ✓ The Civil Rights department has returned to their regular offices in the APAC building, 425 Second Street SE Suite 960. The phone remains the same, 286-5036. The next regular Civil Rights Commission meeting is Wednesday, August 27 at 4:30pm.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Sasaki -JLG - Over 700 citizens attended the July 29th River Corridor Redevelopment Plan open houses. As of July 31st, more than 200 comment sheets have been received. The Sasaki-JLG team will begin to summarize this information along with feedback from recent stakeholder meetings. The consultants will use this data to develop concepts for the draft framework reinvestment plan. The concepts, which will be presented at the September 9th open houses, will include neighborhood revitalization, floodplain management, transportation improvements, and facilities master planning.
- ✓ Based on City Council direction, a demolition program has been initiated to remove structures determined to pose an immediate threat to public health, safety, or welfare. To insure compliance with regulations for reimbursement eligibility through the Public Assistance Program, staff has collaborated with FEMA and Adjusters International consultants on program administration and a competitive procurement process. Staff will present the recommended award for the demolition contract to City Council on Wednesday, August 6th, based on the eight bids received on Wednesday, July 30th.
- ✓ The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is provided through federal and state agencies following a major disaster to fund recovery activities that could reduce the loss of life and property in future disasters. The City's first step in the application process is submitting a Notice of Interest to the State in September. The Notice of Interest will include a preliminary listing of residential property owners interested in a voluntary acquisition.

Surveys will be available for residents to indicate their interest in a voluntary acquisition at upcoming Neighborhood meetings on Monday, August 4th at 7:00 p.m. (Jefferson High School) and Thursday, August 7th at 7:00 p.m. (Washington High School). Interest surveys will also be available starting Tuesday, August 5th at:

1. Westdale Mall – in the Contractor Certification Center on the lower level near Younker's.
2. City website at www.cedar-rapids.org – where it can be printed, completed, and mailed.

Additional Questions regarding the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program should be forwarded to the Department of Community Development at 286-5041.

- ✓ Staff and the State Historic Preservation Office partnered to develop a review process for historic structures in the 100 year floodplain seeking exemptions from the Floodplain Management Ordinance. A letter explaining the application process will be sent to property owners this week. Of all the flood affected communities, Cedar Rapids is the only community that has approached the State Historic Preservation Office regarding exemptions for historic structures. Allowing flexibility for identified historic structures will help maintain the character of Cedar Rapids' neighborhoods, while remaining compliant with the National Flood Insurance Program. The Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has expressed interest in meeting with owners of historic properties to assist with the application process. HPC members will have a City-issued photo ID while visiting affected historic properties.
- ✓ City staff, Sasaki, and JLG met with the General Services Administration (GSA) and Federal officials to discuss the future of the proposed new federal courthouse. The discussion included the potential development on the proposed site north of 8th Avenue SE between 2nd Street SE and the Cedar River. The GSA is examining other potential sites in or near the Central Business District. One significant issue is whether to restore the existing courthouse building and move back in versus moving up the timeline for new construction. The GSA will be preparing minutes of the meeting to share with all parties in attendance.
- ✓ Code Enforcement Division - Certification of contractors performing clean-up, construction, or repair work within the flood-affected area continues. Over 5,500 contractors from 856 companies have gone through the certification process. Enforcement has been ongoing since the process began. Contractors working within the flood affected area performing cleanup, construction, or repair services must have a City-issued photo identification badge. Uncertified contractors found performing these services within the flood-affected area will be subject to a \$100 fine per day or up to 30 days in jail. The Contractor Certification Center is open 8am to 5pm in the lower-level of Westdale Mall.
- ✓ Housing Services has received formal authorization from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to access the City's FY08 annual Community Development Block Grant allocation. This will allow the Housing Rehabilitation Program staff to process a limited number of emergency housing rehabilitation cases. Priority will be given to owner-occupants outside the 100-year flood area who:
 - Were on the City's comprehensive rehabilitation waiting list prior to the June 2008 flood
 - Have applied to Housing Services for flood recovery rehabilitation assistance. and
 - Sustained flood damage that is feasible to repair.

The program is designed to complement (not supplant or duplicate) other resources available to the homeowner, such as FEMA and insurance settlements. Rehabilitation activities funded through CDBG will be limited to those necessary to address imminent threats to health and safety, and/or actions necessary to protect the property from further deterioration due to the effects of the disaster. Participants will be required to provide documentation of other sources of assistance, and staff will perform an analysis to determine feasibility of repairs. This "pilot" program may be used as a model in the event supplemental CDBG funding becomes available to assist additional homeowners.

New applications for assistance to the City's federal housing programs have stabilized, with only five (5) new applications for assistance being made by flood victims in the week of July 28 – August 1. However, as of August 1, Housing Services has issued 112 vouchers to families participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Of those, 28 have secured new housing units and signed leases. Additionally, eight (8) participants have identified units, which are being inspected prior to occupancy, and five (5) program participants have been able to return to their original unit. Six (6) families have chosen to transfer their voucher to other communities, and four (4) have not yet picked up their vouchers. More than half of program participants (60 individuals) have not yet been able to secure replacement housing or return to their unit.

FIRE

- ✓ There have been many inquiries as to when the river will reopen. Until the cable has been re-attached and the contamination levels are at an acceptable level, the river will remain closed.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- ✓ There are 77 City employees who were directly affected by the flood. An employee committee has been formed to create opportunities for employees to help each other.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- ✓ The Information Technology Division will start to operate under a new organizational structure. The new functional areas and the manager responsible for each area is listed below.
 - **Application Design & Development (AD&D)** - Areas of Responsibility: Application Support, Content Management, DBA Development & Support, and Web Development & Support
Mark Freeze (Acting)
Email: m.freeze@cedar-rapids.org
Phone: 286-5016
 - **Customer Relationship Manager (CRM)** - Areas of Responsibility: Service Desk, PC Services & Disposal, Projects, Contracts, and Research
Julie Macauley
Email: j.macauley@cedar-rapids.org
Phone: 286-5118
 - **Geographical Information Systems (GIS)** - Areas of Responsibility: Mapping and Analysis
Russ Camp
Email: r.camp@cedar-rapids.org
Phone: 286-5086
 - **Operations Manager (OPS)** - Areas of Responsibility: Network Infrastructure, Server Support, Communications, Connectivity, and Security
Keith Nuehring (Acting)
Email: k.nuehring@cedar-rapids.org
Phone: 286-5622

All service requests should be routed through the IT Service Desk. itsupport@cedar-rapids.org or by calling 286-5500.

LIBRARY

- ✓ Westdale Mall has provided another store front to the library, which the staff has dubbed the “West Wing.” The additional space (two doors from the existing branch on the second floor) allows the Library to display more of the collection, including some of the 32,000 items that were checked out during the flood and have been returned. Many downtown patrons made the trip out to Westdale on Friday for the “West Wing” Grand Opening.
- ✓ The Library Board of Trustees continues to seek additional temporary space as the store fronts at Westdale Mall cannot accommodate the 100,000 remaining items in the collection, 55 staff members, programming, and thousands of patrons. Big Lots is only one option being considered; several others are being evaluated. City staffer Marty Hoeger has been a great help.
- ✓ The library is now able to send news to residents via e-mail. Sign up for occasional library updates by sending a blank e-mail to: join-crpl_readers_rebuild@lists.ia.gov
- ✓ The Library’s supporting organization, the *CRPL FOUNDATION*, reports that many residents and out-of-state individuals and groups are sending donations to help the City rebuild the collection and the library.
- ✓ The *Friends of the CRPL*, the charitable organization that supports literacy programs through used book sales, is seeking storage space and a site to locate their used book drop. Their storage and book drop were also flood victims. Until space is found, they are **not** able to accept used book donations.

PARKS & RECREATION

- ✓ The 8th Avenue Farmers Market, (Saturday only), will move back to its 8th Ave. location beginning August 9th.
- ✓ A free swim will be held at Bever and Cherry Hill Pools on August 19th. This free swim began as a way for flood affected students to reconnect with each other before the start of the school year. The swim has now grown into a citywide free swim event.
- ✓ Harbor Update – Letters have been sent out regarding refunds and demolition of unsalvageable property. The DNR will be organizing stakeholder meetings.
- ✓ A media tour was conducted at Ushers Ferry last week.
- ✓ Cheyenne Park on the far SW side was covered with sand and debris and will be among the largest of cleanup undertakings in the park system.

- ✓ Work has started to remove the 9th Avenue railroad bridge which fell into the river during the flood. This will entail closing a portion of the Cedar River Trail south of 8th Avenue SE. Trail traffic will be rerouted around the Park and Ride parking lot and will rejoin the existing trail near the 12th Avenue bridge. The detour will be well marked. Trail users, at this time, can go as far south on the trail as the 16th Avenue bridge. The Cedar Rapids portion of the trail is closed due to flood damage below 16th Avenue SW but is open to the north all the way to Hiawatha.
- ✓ Goodwill donations are arriving for the reconstruction of Jones golf course. The latest receipt was from a golfer/insurance broker from a New York City suburb who saw the feature on the Cedar Rapids flood on the Golf Channel.

POLICE

- ✓ The National Night Out is scheduled for Tuesday, August 5th with events scheduled in 11 different locations. CR Police and Fire crews are scheduled to attend each event. Special thanks go to Sgt Cristy Hamblin for coordinating with the hosts as the Police Department takes the lead this year with this event.
- ✓ Lt. Brent Long attended a FBI National Academy Associates Training Conference in Milwaukee, WI, July 27-30, 2008. The training covered current law enforcement issues.
- ✓ Investigator Denni Randall attended a Financial Investigative Techniques course at Camp Dodge in Johnston, IA, July 28-30. This 3-day school will help Randall investigate financial crimes.
- ✓ Officers Jason Weininger and Matt Mullen attended an Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings in Socorro, New Mexico, July 28-31, 2008.
- ✓ The CRPD assisted the Continuum of Care program with the semi annual homeless count July, 30, 2008 at 4:30am. It was fortunate to find only one homeless man from Tennessee and just a couple of other spots that appeared to have been occupied at sometime recently.
- ✓ Many officers testified and were instrumental in the conviction of James Bentley in adding the state sexual abuse charge to his 100 year federal sentence.
- ✓ The Cedar Rapids Police Recruits finished their defensive tactics and physical fitness portion of the academy. They all met their requirements in the mile and a half run, sit-ups, push ups and sit and reach. This week they will be spending 20 hours in defensive driving.
- ✓ The CRPD has been working closely with Alliant Energy to get the building back on electric power instead of generated power. This conversion is expected to be complete this week.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ Traffic began using the detour road on Edgewood Rd south of Prairie Creek beginning August 1, 2008. This detour will be in place until the new Edgewood Rd paving is opened sometime in October 2008. Work has also begun on the third contract along Edgewood Rd SW to build the earth embankment for the bridge over the CRANDIC railroad. This contract will continue into November or December of 2008.
- ✓ On August 1st, traffic signal techs completed the installation of an interim span wire signal assembly for 3rd Street at 1st Avenue W, and returned the intersection to signalized control. The intersection had been all-way stop-controlled since a floating semi-trailer knocked down the mast arm on June 12th. Of the 56 signals impacted by the flood, 54 have been returned to operation. The two other traffic signals are likely to remain dark for some time: the mid-block school crossing signal on Ellis Blvd near L Ave NW and the signal that formerly served outbound buses from the GTC at 5th Avenue & 1st Street SE.
- ✓ Paint striping for white paint will complete early in the week and yellow paint work will begin. There are roughly 4 to 5 weeks of yellow paint work.
- ✓ School crossing work is in progress and depending on weather it should be complete by August 15 in support of the start of schools around August 25.
- ✓ The mowing crew is working in the southwest quadrant near Westdale mall. The crew will move to 6th Street SW and Kirkwood Blvd SW toward the end of the week.
- ✓ Road Sweeping: flood zone area, routes 27, 28, east alleys, 50, and 51. 1st round was completed.
- ✓ East major road repair work: Otis Road SE
- ✓ West major road repair work: Zika NW, M Ave NW, and E Ave NW
- ✓ South major road repair work: 18th St SW, 18th Ave SW
- ✓ Concrete repairs to sanitary box outs and panels on Sue Lane NW. Completion of work will occur on 1st Avenue west on three locations in the Stoney Point area.

- ✓ Sewer crews are televising in the flood zone at roughly a 12,000 ft per week pace.

TREASURY

- ✓ City Council, County Supervisors and staff have been busy giving tours and providing information to various governmental agencies, congressional staff and local legislators regarding flood damages. Sandy Baruah, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, Ben Erulkar, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bob Cecil, EDA Economic Development Representative for Iowa, Congressman Loeb sack and his staff and Beth Freeman from Senator Harkin’s office met with council members and staff, county officials and others on Saturday, July 26 to discuss long-term business recovery. Baruah encouraged the development of relationships in the Corridor in terms of forming regionalized economic development. They are willing to work closely with us to create a long-term economic development process.
- ✓ On August 6th several Vision Iowa board members will be in Cedar Rapids to tour the flood affected downtown, especially the library and cultural/recreational venues, and to discuss possible CAT funding opportunities.
- ✓ The city continues to work closely with our Congressional delegation, state legislators and lobbyists to secure funding and assistance. We are very appreciative of all the effort each has put forth on behalf of the City.

COUNCIL MEMBERS’ CALENDAR

*(Not all meetings are noted. The calendar is **not** an official posting.)*

Monday, August 4	8:00am 7:00pm	Council Briefing, <i>(Lower level conference room, City Hall)</i> Community Neighborhood meeting, <i>(Jefferson High School auditorium, 1243- 20th Street SW)</i>
Tuesday, August 5	11:00am 7:00pm	Media Briefing, <i>(Lower Level, City Hall)</i> National Night Out in the Neighborhoods
Wednesday, August 6	9:30am 5:30pm	IDED Vision Iowa meeting and tour, <i>(City Hall North)</i> Council Meeting, <i>(AEGON USA Auditorium, 4333 Edgewood Rd)</i>
Thursday, August 7	7:00pm	Community Neighborhood meeting, <i>(Washington High School cafeteria, 2205- Forest Drive SE)</i>
Friday, August 8	7:00am 8:00am	Boards & Commissions interviews, <i>(Lower level conference room, City Hall North)</i> Council Briefing, <i>(Lower level conference room, City Hall North)</i>
Saturday, August 9	10:00am	Mound View Neighborhood Association meeting, <i>(Central Park Presbyterian Church, 1700- B Avenue NE)</i>