

Storms pummel city four nights; sewer fills up

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Anyone with a CodeRED telephone weather warning system was awakened several times Thursday through Sunday nights when storms packing violent winds ripped branches, toppled trees and flooded streets.

Central Nebraska Public Power District recorded a wind gust of 73 mph around midnight Friday.

In a four-day period, nearly eight inches of rain filled streets, basements and ball fields.

That caused the city sewer to back up as well as some residents pumping water from basements into the sanitary sewer, according to city services director Shane Gruber.

When pumping floodwater from homes or businesses, Gruber said excess water should be pumped outside on lawns—not into the sanitary sewer.

On Monday, the three pumps at the wastewater treatment plant were processing as much water as they could.

“They’re not keeping up very well but by the end of today or tomorrow (Tuesday), the sanitary flow should be back to normal,” Gruber said, noting that residents should discontinue using

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washing machines, dishwashers or bathing during and after times of heavy rain.

Flood warnings for the Platte River were issued by the National Weather Service.



River water was measured at 6.8 feet Tuesday noon near Cozad and expected to fall below flood stage—at 6.5 feet—by evening today (Wednesday).

Barry and Gwen McDiarmid, who own the KOA campground south of town, were optimistic that a run-off channel of the Platte that flows by their campground would not overflow.

Heavy rain, low spots and a high water table caused minor flooding in several areas of the campground.

Before a new bridge and before a spill channel replaced a dike upstream where the Platte crosses under I-80, the McDiarmids battled serious flooding in the 1990s.

However in 1998, they installed a bridge over the channel.

The new bridge, on which campers drive to get into the campground, is two feet higher than the previous one.

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