

Access road built up to protect I-80 from flooding

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Graders and dump trucks from the Nebraska Department of Roads are out in force this week south of Gothenburg.

Workers are creating a berm and building up an access road that winds north and west of the K.O.A.campground/British Imports Store.

Ted Steuben, the NDOR supervisor for the Gothenburg area, said the state is trying to keep water away from Interstate 80 since the swollen Platte River is expected to receive even more water.

“The word is that we’re getting higher water in the area in about 10 days,” he said Tuesday morning. “We’re getting prepared because of the high water in North Platte.”

Steuben said workers will build up the access road with about a foot of crushed concrete and create a berm on the south side.

When they’re finished with the road project, he said they’ll reinforce a spot by the southeast corner of the river bridge over I-80 a mile west of town.

Dawson County civil defense director Brian Woldt is advising residents near the river to start preparing for flooding now by moving trailers and items from basements to higher ground.

Woldt said Federal Emergency Management Agency officials are advising civil defense directors and others to prepare for a 100-year flood since mountain snow melt from the South Platte, added to already high water in the North Platte, is expected to begin careening down the

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river in the next few weeks.

“That could cause some havoc, heartburn and probably headaches for some people, primarily those in between two channels of the Platte and along the river south of I-80,” he said.

Mid to late June is also often when storms with plenty of rain rumble into the area as is expected later this week and next.

In the Gothenburg area, Woldt said property between the Cozad Canal and Platte River could be in jeopardy as well as land between two river bridges south of the Cozad interchange.

Because of flooding, the K.O.A. campground closed to the general public last Friday and will not reopen until at least mid August, according to co-owner Barry McDiarmid.

Woldt said a few homes in and around Overton may experience water in their basements because of a high water table.

How the flood scenario will play out is “anyone’s guess,” he said, noting that he hasn’t seen a recent map that shows what can be expected.

With flooding occurring across the state, a public hotline has been established for Nebraskans to call with questions. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Public Information Hotline can be reached at: 855-211-2453 or 855-211-2454.

The hotline will be staffed by National Guard troops with assistance by public information officers from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays until further notice.

A State Emergency Operation Center is also open at NEMA from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays

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until further notice in response to flooding and potential flooding expected as water levels increase across Nebraska.

Flood-related resources and links can also be found on the NEMA [website](#) .

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com

308-537-3636