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SUSPECT IN CUSTODY >> PAGE A4



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KOKOMO TRIBUNE

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Saturday, April 20, 2013

Kokomo, Indiana 75¢

KOKOMO DOUSED

Record flood

High water displaces many, destroys property



KT photos | Tim Bath

RESCUE: Taylor Township Volunteer Firefighters rescue Jimmy White from his truck that was swept away in the water rushing over the Wildcat Creek bridge and roadway on 300 East just south of 100 North on Friday morning.

Residents stranded as Wildcat overflows

BY MIKE FLETCHER
KOKOMO TRIBUNE

Record flooding in Kokomo kept city officials busy Friday rescuing residents in low-lying areas along the Wildcat Creek after the waterway running through Kokomo poured over its banks.

As of 2 p.m., the Wildcat Creek reached 18.61 feet, nearly a foot more than it was during the July 4, 2003 flood, which reached 17.75 feet, said Larry Smith, director of the Howard County Emergency Management Agency.

The creek is expected to crest tonight.

The Kokomo Fire Department rescued dozens of residents from flooded homes and homes surrounded by water. Their efforts were hampered by people stopping to look at the flooding.

"We really need people to stay home if they can," said Pat O'Neill, chief of the Kokomo Fire Department.

O'Neill sent out a press release at about 2 p.m. after traffic jams impeded emergency workers in their rescue efforts.

The flooding also shut down a number of north-south streets including Main and Union streets and Washington Street at Park Avenue heading downtown. Both Highland and Foster parks were completely under water.

"We've rescued about a dozen people so far," O'Neill said at 4 p.m.

The number of actual rescues is unknown since some crews

went to rescue one person and saw two or three more who needed help.

"We're still in an emergency situation," O'Neill said.

"We've had a few basements collapse, one small electrical fire and Duke Energy is pulling meters in structures deemed dangerous," he said. "It's still an ongoing operation. It's been a very taxing day and we're continuing emergency operations. I've worked the last two big floods and this is significantly more water than in the past."

To deal with the number of calls for help, the city set up a command post at the Kokomo Fire Department's main station on Superior Street, which is routine during a natural disaster.

"This way we can dispatch our people automatically and clear up dispatch traffic for the city and county," Deputy Chief Jim Shaffer of the Kokomo Fire Department said.

Shaffer also said he's never seen a flood this bad.

"I've been here 25 years and never seen Washington Street shut down," he said.

As of 2 p.m. the only north-south streets open were U.S. 31, Apperson Way and Dixon Road, said Shaffer.

The flooding left residents stranded in their homes and at times in their vehicles.

Despite barricades set up on flooded roads, some drivers ignored the blocks and ended up getting stranded in high water.

>> See **FLOOD** // Page A7



SALVAGED: Mike Trine carries his dog and clothes out of the flood water on South Union Street just south of the Wildcat Creek. He walked out then put on his dry clothes.

Flood victims seek shelter

■ Many searched all morning for a place to take their pets.

BY LINDSEY ZILIAK
KOKOMO TRIBUNE

Kathy Elrod curled up on a cot at Memorial Gymnasium late Friday afternoon wrapped in a heavy fleece blanket and wearing the dry T-shirt and pants a Red Cross volunteer gave her.

She was still cold. Just hours earlier, firefighters rescued her from her Washington Street home.

By the time they arrived, floodwaters were spilling onto her bed and carrying some of her furniture away, she said.

"Everything was wet," she said. "The water was cold."

She was in her nightgown and house coat and soaked when rescuers arrived at her door. She had just enough time to grab her pocketbook and diabetes medication before they took her away.

Elrod ended up at the Red Cross emergency evacuation shelter in

ON THE WEB:

For complete streets closings log on to www.cityofkokomo.org.

Memorial Gym downtown along with about a dozen others who were settling in for the night.

Friday morning, though, many displaced Kokomo residents scrambled to find places for their pets to stay for the evening. While people could seek refuge in the Red Cross shelter, animals couldn't.

Carol Knolinski showed up at the shelter with her toy poodle, Ozzie.

Red Cross officials said the dog couldn't stay there, but they did help Knolinski look for a place to take him.

But the Humane Society wasn't accepting pets, and many area boarders were either out of space or required documentation that people didn't think to grab before they rushed out of their homes.

Knolinski breathed a sigh of relief when the Red Cross found a groomer in West Middleton who would board her dog for \$6 a night.

>> See **SHELTER** // Page A8

HOOSIERS CAN REPORT DAMAGE ONLINE:

Indiana residents who sustained damage caused by severe weather and flooding from April 17 through 22 can report damage online at the Indiana Department of Homeland Security website at in.gov/dhs.

In the middle of the page under "Featured Topics," click on "Report Damage From Severe Storms and Flooding - April 17-22, 2013."

Individuals will be asked to provide their name, address, phone number and type of damage the property sustained. Losses can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property.

INSIDE



BAG IT UP: Scott Hemmberger and Terry Finley bag sand to put in front of the doors of Scott Lithography at 310 S. Union St.

• Flooding in Kokomo, Tipton, Logansport and Howard County has reached record levels following more than 4 inches of rain throughout the region Thursday and Friday.

The deluge came following a period of steady rain earlier in the week that left farm fields saturated and dumping water into drainage ditches and creeks. **Page A4**

• Officials in both Kokomo and Tipton are looking for ways to resolve the situation before the next severe storm dumps more than 4 inches of rain on the area in a 24-hour period. **Page A4**

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WEATHER Quiet weather for the weekend • **HIGH 48** // **LOW 30** >> More on Page A8

>> TODAY'S PAGE ONE DESIGNED BY JUSTIN CHISHAM, PHIL MILLER



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