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## KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

### Lawrence A. Stelma – Sheriff

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701 Ball Avenue, N.E. • Grand Rapids • Michigan • 49503



#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2018

Contact: Lisa LaPlante – 616.632.7567

### Leaders Ask for Continued Awareness, Vigilance during Flooding

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Flooding continues to have a major impact on West Michigan, as the forecast calls for river levels to continue to rise today. Community leaders are asking residents to continue to use caution and avoid flooded areas. Residents near the LaBarge Dam (on the Thornapple River at 84<sup>th</sup> Street in Caledonia Township) were notified last night about concerns over the integrity of the embankment, while crews installed a membrane to shore up support.

“Firefighters went door-to-door to let residents know about the situation,” said Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. “The dam itself appears to be holding up at this time, and further inspection is planned today. As we have said all week, our primary concern is the safety and well-being of residents and first responders.”

Two orders have been issued asking residents to stay away from floodwaters during this flooding situation. The Kent County Health Department issued a “no-contact advisory” in the wake of the flooding. “Flood waters can carry bacteria and runoff from fields and parking lots,” said Adam London, Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “As a result, the contaminants found in flood water often contain feces from farm animals and wildlife as well as toxic chemicals like gasoline or oil.” (A full news release on this can be found at [www.accesskent.com/News/2018/02232018-4.pdf](http://www.accesskent.com/News/2018/02232018-4.pdf).)

The City of Grand Rapids has issued an order to close the Grand River within city boundaries to recreational use, including anglers and watercraft. Individuals violating this order are subject to arrest or fines. The order remains in effect until further notice.

The City of Grand Rapids appreciates those in the community who have offered to fill sand bags, Fire Chief John Lehman said. The City does not need volunteers this time around. “We have spent nearly \$15 million to upgrade our flood wall protection system since 2013, and it is showing,” Lehman said. “The community can help by staying out of the river and away from the water's edge.” For updates on river conditions and the City’s response, visit [www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Home/Emergency-Announcements/Important-Weather-Update](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Home/Emergency-Announcements/Important-Weather-Update). **Grand Rapids residents** with concerns about the water levels and questions may call the City’s 311 Customer Service at 311 or 616.456.3000.

Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) reminds residents and motorists experiencing an emergency situation on roadways to call 911. KCRC will respond as directed by law enforcement. KCRC will update County road closures twice a day on their website at [www.kentcountyroads.net/news/entry/flooding-information](http://www.kentcountyroads.net/news/entry/flooding-information), as well as the KCRC Facebook and Twitter pages. Please slow down and heed road warnings and closures.

Reminders regarding flooding:

- If you feel you are in a dangerous situation, evacuate immediately. If you need assistance leaving, call 911. Do not try to 'ride it out' if there is a potential for injury. If you live in a flood-prone area, have an evacuation plan. Be sure you have a preparedness kit with a flashlight, batteries, first aid supplies and cash. Put all medications and important documents where they are easily accessible if you need to leave immediately. Make sure you communicate your whereabouts with loved ones.
- **Turn Around, Don't Drown.** This National Weather Service motto reminds us of the danger of floodwaters. Just two feet of floodwaters can sweep away a car. If you see flood water in the road, or barricades/signs posted on roads, for your safety and that of first responders, please turn around and take a different route.
- Do not try to walk or swim through flood waters. River and creek waters can move fast and carry debris that can be dangerous. Six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock people off their feet.
- If you have water in your home/basement, it could be contaminated with pollutants. Handle items that come in contact with flood waters with care, either by disposing of wet items or when possible, cleaning wet items with a disinfectant.
- Keep pets away from flood waters.
- If you live in an area prone to flooding, make sure personal identification items (i.e. passports and birth certificates) are protected. Back up computer files and keep them in a safe place or store them in a cloud-based service.
- Stay tuned to alerts via TV, radio or weather apps for your phone.
- If you are in need of shelter, contact American Red Cross at 616.456.8661.
- County, State, or Federal funding **is not available** for those who suffer personal property damage. Residents who experience property damage should contact their insurance company immediately.

**KCRC Roads Closed Due to Water over Road (February 24, 2018 at 9:15 a.m., subject to change)**

Summit (12 Mile Rd to 13 Mile Rd)  
 Whipple (Shaner to Myers Lake)  
 Ashley Ave (7 Mile Rd to M-44)  
 Ashley Ave (5 Mile Rd to 6 Mile Rd)  
 Joyce Dr (Cannonsburg Rd to Ramsdell Dr)  
 Reeds Lake Blvd (East Beltline Ave to Manhattan)  
 Konkle (east of Jupiter)  
 Indian (off West River)  
 River Point (off Indian)  
 Abrigador Trail (off West River)  
 Abrigador Trail (off West River Center)  
 Willow (off 4 Mile Rd)

Willow (off Canright)  
Willow (off Bailey Park)  
Walnut Park (off Northland Dr)  
Shady Dr (off Knapp St)  
Forest Ridge (off Coit Ave)  
Michigan St (Twin Lakes Ave to Crahen)  
60th St (Pratt Lake Ave to Montcalm Ave)  
64th St (East of Pratt Lake Ave)  
Wingeier Ave (64th St to 68th St)  
Pratt Lake Ave (64th St to 68th St)  
Montcalm Ave (Flat River Dr to Covered Bridge Rd)  
68th St (Wingeier to Pratt)  
Jackson St (M-21 to Oberley Dr)  
Vincent (92nd St to 100th St)  
Thornapple River Dr (Fase St to Ada Dr) – closed at 6:00 pm 2-23-18  
Grand River Dr (Jackson St to Montcalm Ave)  
Mall (off West River Dr)  
Austerlitz (off West River Dr)  
West River Dr (east bound at Indian, right lane)  
West River Dr (west bound at Northland Dr, right lane)  
Riverbend (between Butterworth and Veterans Dr) (City of Walker)  
White St (West of Franklin Ave) (City of Grandville)  
Division Ave (North of RR Tracks) (City of Grandville)  
Indian Mounds Drive (City of Grandville)  
Sanford Ave north of Nardin (City of Grandville)  
Busch Drive (City of Grandville)  
Franklin Avenue north of the railroad tracks (City of Grandville)

**National Weather Service River Warnings  
(February 24, 2018 at 8 a.m.; subject to change)**

***Thornapple River Near Caledonia:*** through Tuesday morning. Friday the stage was 11.8 feet. Flood stage is 10.0 feet. The river will continue rising to near 12.0 feet tomorrow. The river will fall below flood stage Monday.

***Grand River in Ada:*** through Wednesday morning. Friday the stage was 22.2 feet. Flood stage is 20.0 feet. Moderate flooding expected, with levels to rise above flood stage by this evening and continue to rise to near 22.5 feet on Sunday. The river will fall below flood stage Tuesday.

***Grand River at Grand Rapids:*** through Wednesday night. Friday the stage was 19.2 feet (flood stage is 18.0 feet). The forecast calls for the river to rise above flood stage after midnight tonight and continue to rise to near 21.3 feet Sunday morning. The river will fall below flood stage Wednesday.

***Grand River at Comstock Park:*** until further notice. Thursday the stage was 16.3 feet (flood stage is 12.0 feet). The river is expected to rise to 17.6 feet Sunday with additional rising possible thereafter. Approximately 100 homes in Comstock Park and Plainfield Township are impacted at this time.

**Grand River at Lowell:** through Wednesday night. Friday the stage was 17.9 feet; flood stage is 15.0 feet. Moderate flooding is expected as the river will continue rising to near 18.3 feet Sunday. The river will fall below flood stage Wednesday.

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