

Floods took their toll in Farmington

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Dumpsters floating into neighborhoods, trees across power lines and plenty of water were just a few of the things Farmington residents experienced during last week's floods, which hit the area in a torrent.

A few younger folks even took to boating in the Shilawassee City Park. "We may hold a regatta if it rains today," Gary Goss, deputy director of the Farmington Department of Public Safety, said Thursday as residents began cleaning up from the mess.

City officials expected it might take several days to return life to normal, presuming no more heavy rain came.

"It's receding fairly well," Goss said. "In reality, we didn't have a whole lot above us or below us (on the Rouge). There's not a lot blocking it (water flow) downriver. It's just a matter of getting things out of the Farmington area."

AT VALLEY View Condominiums on Grand River, one of the hardest hit places in the city, residents began the cleanup process Thursday morning.

Valley View resident and local attorney Ron Oglesby waded to his home Wednesday to get clothing, then spent the night with friends in Livonia. "I had boots, but that didn't help," he said. "The stream just sought a straight route — the current almost knocked you down."

Oglesby was preparing to get to work with other Valley View residents, scraping and cleaning their buildings. He was also getting shopping lists from some of the older residents so he could go to the store for goods and medications.

"It's like a party," he added. "There's just a lot of fun people there. Residents are already down



Valley View condominiums, located in a low-lying area of Farmington, was among the most-flooded areas in the metropolitan area after last week's rains.

there scraping the crud that the water left."

PUBLIC SERVICES employees were waiting for the water to recede before doing much work, said Kevin Gushman, assistant public services director for Farmington. Employees had spent Wednesday putting up barricades and pumping water on

Smithfield in the Chatham Hills subdivision on the city's west side.

Water department staffers were making sure drains were open to facilitate the water flow out of the area.

In the Bel Aire subdivision, south of 10 Mile, between Orchard Lake Road and Power, residents on

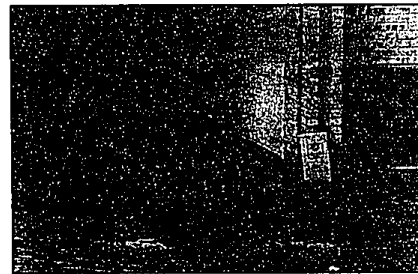
Lamar and Beacon had sewage backing up into the basements, while numerous others throughout the city had rainwater seepage and leaks in basements walls and floors, Gushman said.

BY THE end of last week, public services employees worked some overtime, Gushman said, while public safety officers logged some 19½ hours of overtime, according to Goss.

"This was bad, very bad," said Gushman. "It doesn't compare with your average thunderstorm, that's for sure."

Gushman said the storm was especially bad because of constant rains in the area the previous week, which had already saturated the ground.

When last week's storm hit, the ground just couldn't take anymore water, he said.



A pair of mallard ducks swims under the carport at the Valley View Condominiums in Farmington on Wednesday.



Sally Bayliss and Claudette Haney watch the rising waters of the Rouge covering the west-

ern end of Shilawassee Park in Farmington Wednesday. Power Road is visible to the right.

Cleanup saddles city, residents with big job

Al Jean of Jean's Hardware on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills was busy reordering sump pumps, floor squeegies, hoses and wet and dry vacs Friday in the wake of Wednesday's downpour.

"People are buying anything to suck out water," he said.

He quickly rented out all four of his rinse and vacs following the torrential rain Wednesday.

Jean, who has lived here since 1956, called the flooding the worst he can remember because "the rain came so much and so many areas were under water." The river next to his store rose to within a foot of his parking lot.

While residents were bailing out their yards and basements Wednesday, city crews were out fixing washed-out roadbeds, such as a 15-foot-long stretch in the west-bound lane of 14 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road, said Sgt. Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Department Traffic Section.

Crews temporarily patched the collapsed roadbed in 2½ hours. "A culvert opened under the road, causing the washout," assistant city manager David Call said.

The city will permanently repair the road in July.

DURING THE downpour Wednesday, portions of major roads, such as Orchard Lake Road and Northwestern Highway were closed. M-103 in the southeastern section of the city was closed Wednesday for about 1½ hours, Cranston said.

At one point, some were diving and swimming in Northwestern's median, a feat police asked not to be

repeated. "You never know what's under the water. There's a lot of debris," Cranston said.

Upwards of 150 basements were flooded in the storm, many in the area bounded by 12 Mile, Drake, 13 Mile and Orchard Lake Road. The Livonia-based Carpet Clinic was receiving 15 calls a day from Farmington Hills residents to clean waterlogged carpeting, spokesman Chris Mench said.

"We've got two or three crews out a day and we'll probably work through the weekend," Mench said.

BY THURSDAY, city crews finished 90 percent of the work required to remove water over roadways, repair road washouts and clear culverts. Some culvert and shoulder repairs still had to be done Friday.

Retention basins are being inspected to make sure outlets are clear in case we get another rain, assistant city manager David Call said.

No dollar estimate of the damage was available Friday.

"We're also working on a flood location map to present to the city council to show where major problems were and where the minor problems were," Call said.

The city logged 300 calls relating to the downpour, he said.

Farmington Hills firefighters responded to 97 calls between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. Wednesday — six lightning strikes, three medical calls, eight traffic accidents, one fireworks explosion, three downed wires, one car fire and 75 citizen assists or flooded basements.

No emergency declared

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

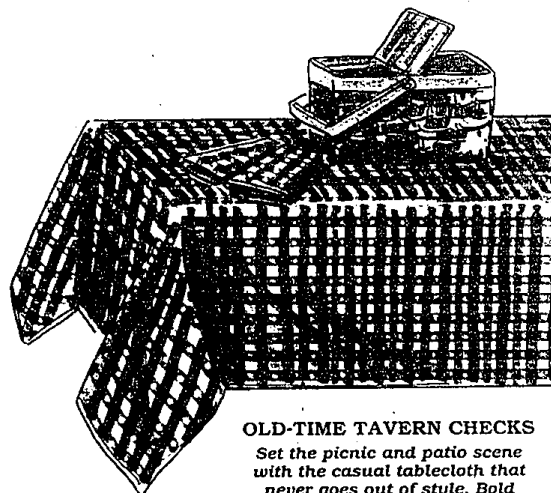
Though residents are angry, Farmington Hills officials aren't planning to declare the flooding

from Wednesday's downpour an emergency.

"I don't anticipate that at this point," city manager William Costick said Thursday. "We haven't had massive damage any place."

But that doesn't mean residents and city crews don't have their hands full in the aftermath of the downpour that dumped a reported 4.15 inches from June 19 to June 22.

Please turn to Page 7



OLD-TIME TAVERN CHECKS

Set the picnic and patio scene with the casual tablecloth that never goes out of style. Bold jacquard-woven cotton checks in red/white or blue/white. 52" square, \$18; 60" round, \$26. 54x70" oblong, \$26; 54x90" oblong, \$35; Napkins, each \$3.

Jacobson's

We welcome Jacobson's Charge, MasterCard, VISA® and American Express®. Shop until 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.