



Wood River explores options to avoid water flowing over Illinois 143 again

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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WOOD RIVER - **Wood River City Manager Jim Schneider** has been affiliated with the city for 35 years and he never remembers Illinois 143 between Illinois Route 255 being closed due to flooding over the road.

During the post-Christmas torrential rains, water flowed over that area and caused it to be closed for two-plus weeks.

The city is exploring solutions to prevent the water going over the road there again. It is a fairly simple, but costly process to solve the problem, Schneider said.

“It is quite expensive to establish a retention basin with pumps on either side of the road,” Schneider said. “It would cost millions of dollars. We are looking at sharing that cost with some people. We would certainly like to see it fixed.”

Schneider said a retention basin could be established on the Phillips 66 side of the road or also the north side of the road if some private land was purchased.

“Right now, the water doesn’t go anywhere,” Schneider said of the water on both sides of the road after heavy rains. “It just stays there.”

The Wood River city manager said some of the high waters were let loose in a retention basin going up to Belk Park because it was threatening some homes.

“We opened it up and drained some of the water out and that made it stand on both sides of Illinois 143 near Illinois Route 255,” Schneider said. “We didn’t have any choice about draining the area near Belk Park because the houses that were affected. Again, I don’t believe the water has ever gone over the road like that in my 35 years with the city.”

Schneider said Illinois 143 being closed for more than two weeks was a big inconvenience to the car dealers and some of the businesses there and to motorists going to and from work, but he said the public handled things well.

“The public understood the situation with the water and flooding,” Schneider said. “We appreciate their patience.”

The city manager said car dealers and nearby businesses were all cooperative during the problem time.

Melissa Erker and Phillips 66 helped immensely with the water situation, Schneider said.

“Melissa called me and asked how Phillips 66 could help and they sent a crew over there with pumps for a few days,” he said. “Our city employees and IDOT also did a good job working with the area.

Without Phillips 66 assisting, the water would have been over the road for more days, Schneider said.

The city manager is hopeful that Phillips 66 and IDOT both will work with the city to find a permanent solution to the problem with water spilling out to the road on both sides of Illinois 143 near Illinois 255.