

FLOOD WATCH 2017: Grafton close to predicted crest, but still open for business

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GRAFTON - Acting Grafton Police Chief Peggy O'Neil said Grafton's river level is a tenth of an inch away from its predicted crest level of the predicted 27.5 feet.

O'Neil was patrolling the streets of Grafton late Wednesday morning. She said water covers the road just west of the intersection of Route 3 and Highway 100, as well as in front of the Grafton Marina, the Hawg Pit and Beasley's Fish Stand. Despite the coming deluge, O'Neil said most of Grafton is still opened for business, and flood roads serve as detours to anyone coming into town - assuming they did not take a large truck or are hauling a long trailer.

"We will probably do some additional checkpoints," she said. "No heavy trucks or long trailers can be on the flood roads, but other than that, it's pretty minimal."

Very few businesses are closed in Grafton at this time, including the Hawg Pit, Drifter's and the beloved Beasley's Fish Market.

O'Neil said she is not very concerned about predicted rainfall at this time, either. She said any rain, which falls in Grafton or south, will only minimally affect the current flooding situation in Grafton - if it does at all. She said she is more concerned about northern forecasts, which at this time are predicting less rainfall over the next 48 hours than in this area.

Another major blow to Grafton, however, is the closure of the Great River Road, or Highway 100, which links Grafton and Alton. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is expected to close much of that road by noon. O'Neil said the reason behind that closing is mostly a result of flooding in Alton, adding other portions between Alton and Grafton are also at risk of being slightly inundated.

"Most people still know how to get here," O'Neil said when asked if she was concerned that major road closure would impact traffic into Grafton.

Travel between Grafton and Pere Marquette is a little more tricky, however, due to the closure of Highway 100 north of the boys' home. Alternate routes to the park can be found by taking Powerline Road, which spurs from Otterville Road.