

Officials Re-Opening Floodgate in East Alton

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WOOD RIVER — There is good news on Tuesday for motorists who use the Illinois Route 3/Broadway corridor from East Alton to Alton.

“We will start opening the floodgates at 7 a.m.,” Wood River Drainage and Levee District Supervisor Vince Milazzo said.

Milazzo said he anticipated the gates would be open by late afternoon/early evening. As a precaution from the rising Wood River Creek, the gates were closed Wednesday to prevent possible flooding of residents and businesses.

“Foreseeing any problems we hope to have them open by the afternoon rush hour,” Milazzo said.

Milazzo attended a Madison County Emergency Management Agency briefing Monday with community stakeholders and informed them of the reopening. Nearly two dozen officials from law enforcement, fire department, Madison County Health Department, Wood River Drainage and Levee District, Metro East Sanitary District and the Illinois National Guard attended the meeting.

EMA Logistics Coordinator Tony Falconio said the good news is the river crested in Alton Sunday at 38.71 feet.

“We are now down 6 inches,” Falconio said.

He said the river would continue dropping around 6 inches per day now that the river crested and the weather outlook appears dry for the next six to 10 days.

Officials also discussed how long the National Guard would remain in Madison County. On Saturday, 60 soldiers from the 33rd Military Police Battalion, 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade arrived replacing 10 who had been here for the week.

Twenty soldiers were placed in Alton to assist the city downtown and 40 went to Hartford to assist local law enforcement and the Madison County Sheriff’s Department in monitoring the counties 44 miles of levees.

The National Guard is expected to be here through the beginning of next week, however local law enforcement will continue to monitor the levees and there the “no trespassing” policy will remain in place.

“We expect the levees to be closed to the public throughout most of the summer as a precaution,” Falconio said.