

Barnhart: Iconic Downtown Alton Flood Wall Should Be Completely Removed in Week or So

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Portions of Alton's now-iconic flood wall have already be disassembled, but it may be a week or more before the rest goes.

Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart said the city is working with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to pick a time to tear it down. The portion stretching from Piasa to State Streets has already been disassembled as the water levels continue to fall. A small bump in that fall will lead to a small rise in the river Wednesday of around two-tenths of a foot, but it is expected to continue subsiding following that. Barnhart said the wall will not be fully disassembled until the water is off the Great River Road. It is currently standing at the bottom of State Street for that purpose.

The flood wall credited with saving most of Downtown Alton from the worst of recent flooding took around 36 hours to construct and was built around two feet above the predicted crest to be safe.

Barnhart said the city is hesitant to tear it down too soon, as waters have been fickle this year. Already, the city has had to dispatch workers to clean the area around Riverfront Park three separate times because of the ebb and flow of flooding.

Meteorologists from the National Weather Service (NWS) told reporters the flood waters may finally recede as early as July 7 as long as precipitation levels stay around average for the area. The recent small bump was caused by backwaters in Alton from flooding on the Missouri River.