

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“100 Year Flood”

It's the 100 year flood. The devastating flood from the waters of the Elkhorn River that hit Norfolk on Tuesday can not only be called Norfolk's 100 year flood but even falls into the 100 to 500 year flood category.



According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Study for Madison County published in February 2005, the flow rates for a flood that would happen only once in 100 years for the Norfolk area would be a flow rate of 30,000 cubic feet per second. On Tuesday night at 9:00 pm, the flow rate of the Elkhorn River was 38,800 cubic feet per second.

Dennis Smith, City of Norfolk engineer, has been closely following the flow rate and the impact of the flood on the City of Norfolk infrastructure.

“It's a major flood for our city, one that hopefully won't occur again in any of our lifetimes,” Smith said.

FEMA publishes the flood disaster information in order for cities and other entities to be able to gauge their ability to prevent intensive damage in their communities and businesses.

“Overall, for the amount of water we're gotten, the community hasn't had the catastrophic damage that it might have had. There are some individual property owners who I know are suffering from the devastating effects of the flood. We're thankful it wasn't any worse,” Smith said.

Smith said that city staff will not be able to completely assess the damage from the floodwaters until the waters recede.

“We're liable to have some road damage in areas where there was water flowing over them. The well waters were never compromised. The surface water over the well field has not affected the city's water. The city is strategically using wells in the well field so that surface water over the well field won't affect water quality,” Smith said.

He added the drinking water in Norfolk has been safe throughout the flood.

“If the west well field would have been compromised, the city has a second well field that could have still supplied the city with clean water,” Smith said.

"We've done as much as we can to protect the public infrastructure. There are some lift stations that serve the flooded areas that are down. We're working diligently to get them back into operation," Smith said.