

SUNDAY



Blackwell Journal-Tribune

80th Year—No. 116

June 11, 1995

Blackwell, Oklahoma (USPS 057-640)

Copyright© 1995 Blackwell Journal-Tribune

5 Sections: 56 Pages

50¢

Brief news
and
personals

Blackwell hit again by flooding

By TERRY GROOVER
J-T Managing Editor

Blackwell residents could do very little but watch Friday afternoon as the Chikaskia River began pouring out of its banks and into their yards.

Boosted by strong thunderstorms that pounded northern Oklahoma and parts of southern Kansas, Blackwell was receiving the brunt of the flooding.

The Chikaskia rose from its gentle seven foot stages of Thursday morning to a much different 31.7 feet by mid-afternoon Friday. And by then, the river was beginning to lap at many of the yards.

Residents of the flood zone, both on the east side of Blackwell, and those north of Main Street, have lived through flooding in Blackwell before. Therefore what awaited them Friday was no real surprise.

"I've got everything in my garage and yard put up. It is up as high as I can get it," said Diania Robles, who has lived on North Main for four years.

She also lived through the floods of 1993, and said that has helped

Sitting next to them on their porch was a canoe — just in case it was needed.

According to Carol Criner, work to prepare for the flooding began well before it was necessary.

"Most folks around here are ready," she said. "We've already got the furniture stacked. You don't know what could be there when you wake up at 4 o'clock. You could be putting your feet in water."

Zachary said flood waters advanced as far as the porch in 1993. He said it is likely that will be the situation again. Whether it is or not, he is prepared.

"We are already prepared. We've put up the stuff and when the water starts getting under the house we turn off the electricity," he said.

Zachary has lived in the house since 1970 and has no plans to move because of the flooding.

"I really don't worry about it," he said.

Zachary and Criner then gave a tour of the home, which is filled with cardboard boxes and stacked furniture.



TRUE WORDS — The water in Blackwell was indeed high, reaching 32.93 by noon Saturday. The scene above looks north on North Main toward the North Main bridge. The Na-

BLACKWELL BOARD of Adjustment will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, in the city administration building, 221 West Blackwell. Appeals on the agenda are those of Kent Gleason, 147 Adams for a garage not meeting the minimum front yard setback in a R/S (single family residential district); Blackwell Nursing Home, 1200 West Coolidge, for a fence not meeting the maximum height requirements in a R/G (residential general district) and Bill Oard, 201 Vinnege, for a garage not meeting the minimum front yard setback requirements in a R/S (single family residential district).

THE BLACKWELL Planning Commission will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, in the city administration building, 221 West Blackwell. On the agenda is approval of an application from Mr. and Mrs. Billy D. Cur-

TRUE WORDS — The water in Blackwell was indeed high, reaching 32.93 by noon Saturday. The scene above looks north on North Main toward the North Main bridge. The National Weather Service said the Chikaskia should begin to drop before Sunday afternoon. (J-T Photo by CWA)

On the east side of Blackwell, where water covered several square blocks, James Loveall and his wife, Rhonda, sat watching as neighborhood children played in the water which covered the street.

The Lovealls expect to remain high and dry. The couple's home is

built on stilts.

"We don't worry," said James Loveall. "We built our house knowing it (flooding) was going to happen. We built our house on stilts because of the flood plain." Loveall is more than familiar with the flood plain. He has lived in his

current home for 10 years and lived in the neighborhood for most of his life.

Despite his dry fortune, Loveall said he did have sympathy for others living in the area.

"For a lot of others, it is really bad for them," he said.

State flooding may reach record levels

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Flooding caused by several days of persistent thunderstorms could reach record levels, and the threat of more storms hung over Oklahoma today, authorities said.

An Oklahoma City woman died Friday and countless others had to be rescued from vehicles that were inundated by high waters. Tornadoes dotted the state as well, causing structural damage but only one minor injury, officials said.

Gail J. Cubie, 33, apparently drowned after her car stalled in high water and she tried to walk to higher ground, police Sgt. Bill Martin said.

A couple living in the Ski Island

area of northwest Oklahoma City said they found her body floating near their dock.

Authorities spent part of Friday pulling other stranded motorists from stalled cars.

"We've had some interesting rescues," said John Lewis, Logan County emergency management director. In one instance, rescuers had to use a boat and ropes to pull a person to safety from a car stranded in high waters.

The Cottonwood Creek in Guthrie had already divided the town in three sections, limiting access to the community of 10,000 about 30 miles north of Oklahoma City.

"We're looking at a crest in town

at about 7 feet above flood stage late tomorrow afternoon," Lewis said Friday. "That's going to be a record for the city."

He expected the record of 29.6 feet set in May 1993 to be broken. The flood stage is 22 feet and the river stood at 26.6 feet Friday afternoon.

Lewis said Guthrie's problems with Cottonwood Creek were compounded by the high level of the Cimarron River north of town. The flood stage on the Cimarron is 13 feet and it stood at 14.22 Friday afternoon. He said the river caused problems with the drainage of the creek.

(Please see FLOODING, P12)

Purchase of flood insurance urged

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Water Resources Board and City of Blackwell officials remind local residents that they are eligible to purchase affordable flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

According to Ken Morris, of the OWRB's Planning Division, participation in the program allows Blackwell residents who live within corporate boundaries to purchase low-cost, federally backed flood insurance. "An aver-

age flood policy costs approximately \$280, which is quite a bargain. In addition, flood insurance policies can be purchased from any licensed property and casualty agent."

"Blackwell officials chose to participate in this program because of the considerable benefits it provides to their citizens," Morris pointed out. "The program also entitles eligible Blackwell residents to obtain low-interest loans and grants in the event of a presidentially declared flood disaster."

Blackwell entered the regular phase of the NFIP, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, on May 1, 1980.

Flood insurance is required if a home is located in a regulatory floodplain and is mortgaged by a federal financial regulatory agency, such as the Federal Housing Administration, Veterans Administration, Small Business Administration, Federal National Mortgage Association or Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation.

(Please see INSURANCE, P12)



Keating vetoes record 57 bills

By RON JENKINS
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Gov. Frank Keating's decision to veto funding for public schools, Head Start and other education- and child-related programs isn't making him a popular man.

Keating has vetoed a record 57 bills.

Drawing the most wrath were vetoes of \$8 million in funding for public schools, \$3 million for Head Start, \$2 million for vocational-technical education, \$215,000 for the Poison Control Center and other funds for breast cancer research, early intervention programs for children and health services.

House Speaker Glen Johnson argued that if some money is spent on the programs now, a lot of money is saved in the future.

"We know the more you spend on

education now, the less you spend on corrections in the future."

Johnson and other members of the Democratic majority in the Legislature accused the Republican governor of putting partisan politics above those of the people.

Keating defended the vetoes at an impromptu news conference, saying some of the programs had merit but flew in the face of his efforts to preserve money in a constitutional rainy day fund for programs he wants.

Those include \$4.6 million in additional funds for prisons, \$6 million for Medicaid and \$12.6 million for growing school districts.

Democrats tried to fund those programs out of the rainy day fund, but the move was blocked by Keating's GOP allies in the House, who sustained his vetoes before the Legislature adjourned May 26.

Keating blasted Democrats for not wanting to return to the Capitol this summer to appropriate those funds in a special session.

He said he did not know if funding for prisons and Medicaid could wait until lawmakers reconvene in February.

He said if "a near-crisis" develops he will call lawmakers back into special session this fall, whether or not he has an agreement on funding.

Keating said his vetoes curbed "wild spending" by the Democrat-controlled Legislature.

He said the executive branch of government was heard "loud and clear" during the legislative session. The result, he said, was a downsizing of state government.

Lawmakers issued a series of news releases Friday pounding Keating for the vetoes.

Sen. Ed Long, D-Garbo education chairman, said veto of education measures hurt economic development.

"You can't take money from education and expect to compete in today's economy," said. "Anyone who's ever been involved in business knows that."

Sen. Cal Hobson, D-Logansport, said Keating's veto of other money and funds for children's programs kills education. "prevent kids from becoming tomorrow's prison statistics."

"Governor Keating is a Grinch who stole Christmas in this case, he's stealing money out of the hands of children," Hobson said.

Keating called Hobson's comments "laughable." He said not shutting down children's programs,

Flooding

Continued from P1

Authorities asked for a team of 50 inmates to help fill and distribute sandbags requested by city businesses and residents. Lewis said most of the areas that are being hit hardest by the flooding are homes that aren't inhabited. The city bought out many of the homes after previous rounds of flooding.

A dispatcher early today said the creek appeared to be receding somewhat.

Late Friday, a rescue crew was sent to Cottonwood Creek to investigate a report of three adults and a child being stranded in a boat, a dispatcher with the Guthrie Police Department said.

Dispatcher Ashley Trout said the four were able to get out on their own and weren't injured.

Waters flowed 10 inches deep across Interstate 40 near El Reno, just west of Oklahoma City, during the morning and highways were closed in many areas of the state.

Later in the day, severe thunderstorms formed again, spawning tornadoes throughout the state.

In Seminole County, one, possibly two twisters damaged houses, toppled power lines and splintered trees in Seminole and 5 miles to the south in Bowlegs, authorities said.

"It looks like it made a path from the southeast to the northeast part of the city," Seminole police dispatcher Darren Heusel said. "There was one unconfirmed report of a car being overturned on (Oklahoma) Highway 9."

localized flooding should look into purchasing a flood policy. In addition, it is important for those who now have flood insurance to keep their policies up-to-date."

Participation in the NFIP allows residents who live within corporate boundaries to purchase low-cost, federally backed flood insurance in exchange for proper management of area floodplains and implementation of other actions to mitigate flood damage.

McVeigh's attorney asks change of venue

By PAUL QUEARY
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The attorney for bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh has asked prosecutors to agree to move McVeigh's trial outside of Oklahoma City.

Stephen Jones released a letter Friday in which he asked U.S. Attorney Patrick Ryan to agree to a change of venue.

In other developments, a lawsuit against a Dallas fertilizer manufacturer was expanded to represent 83 people who say they were harmed by the blast. And a federal magistrate granted a prosecution motion that it has 19 more days to return an indictment against suspect Terry Nichols.

Nichols and McVeigh are the only two charged in the April 19 federal building bombing that killed 168 people and injured more than 500. They are being held at the federal prison in El Reno.

An indictment has not been returned against McVeigh, but his attorney said any trial should not be held in the city where the bombing occurred.

"To ask citizens of central Oklahoma to sit in judgment with a fair and open mind in view of this un-

were used in the 4,800-pound explosion that destroyed the federal building.

The plaintiffs in the amended lawsuit include people who were injured when it was bombed, spouses of some of those injured. The lawsuit also seeks class status which, if granted, would expand the lawsuit to all people harmed by the bombing.

The lawsuit claims that the fertilizer was the principal cause of ammonium nitrate fertilizer used in the bombing. The Mid-Kansas Co-op in Logan, Kan., where authorities say the fertilizer used in the bombing was purchased.

Joe Brawner, president of the American Explosives Manufacturers Association, hasn't had a chance to respond to the amended complaint. Brawner said the company has no contact with anyone from any source that ICI Explosives were involved in the bombing.

"The Oklahoma City bombing isn't about product liability," Brawner said in a telephone interview. "It's about premeditated, intentional misuse of materials in a cowardly terrorist act."

The original plaintiffs in the lawsuit — Lena Gaines-Tabb, Kenneth Burt, Steven Abel and Naeco — were all residents of a

Insurance

Continued from P1

To purchase flood insurance, Morris suggests that local citizens call their insurance agent who normally handles their home owners or car insurance policies.

Morris also encourages Blackwell citizens who currently have flood insurance policies to continue to pay their insurance premiums. "Very property owner or renter who lives near a regulatory floodplain or in an area subject to