

Voluntary Evacuation of Rulo Underway

(KTNC)--As the Missouri River level continues to rise, voluntary evacuations have been ordered for residents in and around the community of Rulo. Richardson County Emergency Management began notifying residents about the voluntary evacuation at 6:00 p.m. Saturday.

Richardson County Emergency Management Director Brian Dixon says County Commissioners and Rulo Village Board members felt it would be in the best interest of public safety to issue the voluntary evacuation due to rising water levels along the Missouri River. The river level Saturday evening was at the edge of its banks, and Dixon says they were expecting it to rise several feet overnight. He says they will reevaluate the situation again Sunday morning.

The latest forecast calls for the river at Rulo to crest at approximately 24-feet on Monday evening. Flood stage at Rulo is 17-feet. Dixon says the river is forecast to fall below flood stage again on Wednesday, unless more rain falls to the north.

In a press release, Dixon says roads leading to flooded areas will be closed and will be reopened when the floodwaters recede and are deemed safe. The evacuation will be lifted when the roads are reopened. Dixon says they can't guarantee utilities and access to emergency services should the roads be flooded.

The evacuation is voluntary at this point, and Dixon doesn't expect it to become mandatory. He says repeated flooding over the past several years has led many people living along the river to take steps to mitigate the effects of flooding, such as elevating their homes. He says the Red Cross is available to provide assistance to those who decide to leave their homes.

Heavy rains fell across the Missouri River Basin Friday night, affecting especially in the southern half of the Omaha metro area. That included 7.75 inches in LaVista. Rain was forecast along the Missouri River again Saturday night and the forecast calls for continued chances of rain over the next several days.

The Richardson County Emergency Management Agency has set up its Mobile Operations Center in Rulo, and Dixon says they will be there until the evacuation order is lifted.

More information and updates on the flooding at Rulo is available online at www.facebook.com/richardsoncoema.