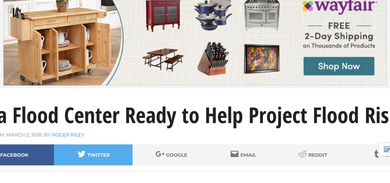

Iowa Flood Center Ready to Help Project Flood Risks

POSTED 9:05 AM, MARCH 2, 2018, BY ROGER RILEY

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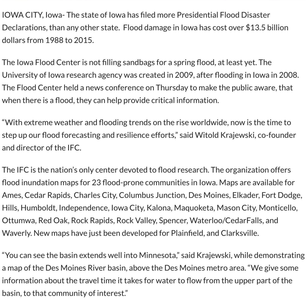

IOWA CITY, Iowa- The state of Iowa has filed more Presidential Flood Disaster Declarations, than any other state. Flood damage in Iowa has cost over $13.5 billion dollars from 1988 to 2015.

The Iowa Flood Center is not filling sandbags for a spring flood, at least yet. The University of Iowa research agency was created in 2009, after flooding in Iowa in 2008. The Flood Center held a news conference on Thursday to make the public aware, that when there is a flood, they can help provide critical information.

"With extreme weather and flooding trends on the rise worldwide, now is the time to step up our flood forecasting and resilience efforts," said Witold Krajewski, co-founder and director of the IFC.

The IFC is the nation's only center devoted to flood research. The organization offers flood inundation maps for 23 flood-prone communities in Iowa. Maps are available for Ames, Cedar Rapids, Charles City, Columbus Junction, Des Moines, Elkader, Fort Dodge, Hills, Humboldt, Independence, Iowa City, Kalona, Maquoketa, Mason City, Monticello, Ottumwa, Red Oak, Rock Rapids, Rock Valley, Spencer, Waterloo/CedarFalls, and Waverly. New maps have just been developed for Plainfield, and Clarksville.

"You can see the basin extends well into Minnesota," said Krajewski, while demonstrating a map of the Des Moines River basin, above the Des Moines metro area. "We give some information about the travel time it takes for water to flow from the upper part of the basin, to that community of interest."

Also information is supplied which would allow user to estimate the cost of damage to buildings under various flooding scenarios.

"Flood control and mitigation are much less expensive than the economic loss, cleanup, and rebuilding that occurs as a result of a flood, said Krajewski. "At the Iowa Flood Center, we are focused on being proactive and reducing the overall cost of flooding for Iowans across the state."

"The National Weather Service will make a forecast of river gauges in Des Moines of the height of the water in individual locations, and the amount of water that's going to arrive," said Nathan Young, Associate Director of the Iowa Flood Center. "We've used computer models to estimate the extent and depth of flooding in the community."

The IFC flood maps online were pressed into use in 2016 when the City of Cedar Rapids came under flood warnings. The interest was so great, Google servers hosting the maps crashed. But the IFC was able to restore service in a few minutes.

"They (Cedar Rapids) had a major flood event, the second largest flood event historically in 2016," said Young. "They were able to use our tools to better anticipate their flood damages, their flood risk, and plan their flood response."

If you would like more information on the Iowa Flood Center, click here.

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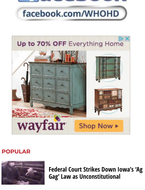

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