

NATIONAL NEWS

Flooding exacerbates water crisis in Mississippi capital

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — In Mississippi's capital, emergency officials are going to distribute bottled water to residents, a local university is using temporary restrooms for students and people who do have water are boiling it to wash dishes as a longstanding water crisis exacerbated by recent flooding is causing low-water pressure problems.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves late Monday said he's declaring a state of emergency after excessive rainfall worsened problems in one of Jackson's already troubled water-treatment plants. The problems are causing low water pressure through much of the city of 150,000 people located in central Mississippi.

The low pressure raised concerns about firefighting and about people's ability to take showers or flush toilets.

Reeves said the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency will start distributing



MICHAEL GOLDBERG/AP PHOTO

Residents in the North Canton Circle neighborhood of Jackson, Miss., on Monday, Aug. 29, 2022, were advised to evacuate from impending floodwaters. Some moved out all of their possessions in U-Haul trucks or cars.

both drinking water and non-potable water, and the National Guard will be called in to help. The governor said he understands people's frustrations.

"I get it. I live in the city. It's not news that I want to hear," Reeves said. "But we are going to be there for you."

The problems at the water treatment plant came after the city appeared to largely avoid widespread flooding from a Pearl River swollen

by days of heavy rain. One home was flooded Monday but Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba said the water did not rise as high as expected. Earlier projections showed about 100 to 150 buildings in the Jackson area faced the possibility of flooding.

The National Weather Service said the Pearl River had crested at about 35.4 feet (10.8 meters). That is short of the major flood stage level of 36 feet (10.97 meters).

Storms blamed in deaths of 3 in Michigan, Ohio, Arkansas

MONROE, Mich. (AP) — Severe storms that brought damaging winds, heavy rains and flash flooding to parts of the Midwest and the South were blamed for the deaths of three people, including two children in Michigan and Arkansas as well as a woman in Ohio.

Monday's storms also knocked out electrical service to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in Michigan and Indiana.

In the Michigan city of Monroe, a 14-year-old girl was electrocuted Monday night in the backyard of her home after coming into contact with an electrical line that was knocked down by a thunderstorm, the public safety department said in a Facebook post.

The girl was with a friend and she reached for what she believed was a stick, but it turned out to be the power line, the department said.

In Arkansas, an 11-year-old boy died after he was swept into a storm drain during heavy rainfall Monday, authorities said.

A 47-year-old woman who tried to help the child was also pulled from the drain and taken to a hospital for treatment, according to police in Bentonville. Slow-moving thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall to the area Monday and caused localized flash flooding, the National Weather Service said.

"Those heavy rains,



DON CAMPBELL/THE HERALD-PALLADIUM VIA AP

A front moves in over Lake Michigan Monday, Aug. 29, 2022, at Tiscornia Park in St. Joseph, Mich.

when they fell, a lot of them fell really quickly and in a short time," said meteorologist Brad McGavock with the weather service in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which covers parts of Arkansas. "Water management through those storm drains can really lead to a big volume of water through those culverts."

In Ohio, a woman was killed Monday night when a tree fell on her behind her home in Toledo just as a strong storm moved through the area, the city's fire department said. Her name and age were not released.

The storms were widespread in states including Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Tree branches and power lines fell while winds gusted as high as 58 mph (93 kilometers per hour) at Battle Creek Executive Airport in Michigan and 60 mph (96 kilometers per hour) in

Huntington, southwest of Fort Wayne, Indiana, the weather service reported.

On Monday night, Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves said that he was declaring a state of emergency after excessive rainfall exacerbated problems in one of Jackson's water-treatment plants and caused low water pressure through much of the capital city. A swollen Pearl River caused flooding in Jackson on Monday, days after storms dumped heavy rain.

The Mississippi flooding was less severe than flooding that caused death and destruction in Kentucky last month. Those floods left at least 39 dead and robbed thousands of families of all of their possessions. Nearly a month later, residents are wrestling with whether to rebuild at the place they call home or to start over somewhere else.

Hazing charges against 5 dropped in pledge's death

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Hazing charges against five former members of a now-expelled Virginia Commonwealth University fraternity in connection with a freshman's death from alcohol poisoning after a party have been dropped.

Six of the 11 former Delta Chi members charged in the death of Adam Oakes, 19, have pleaded guilty or no contest, but a prosecutor in the case declined to say why the charges against the remaining five were dropped last week, The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported. Both charges in these cases are misdemeanors and carry no more than a year in jail and a fine of \$2,500. None of the six received jail time.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Mike Hollomon

declined to comment on the dropped charges, citing the open case status of three other defendants.

Last year, 11 former members of the fraternity were charged with hazing and seven of them with serving alcohol to a minor. VCU suspended the students, a defense attorney said last year, and the university permanently removed the fraternity from campus.

The police investigation found that Oakes was told to drink a large bottle of whiskey in February 2021 and the freshman from Loudoun County was found dead the next morning. The office of the chief medical examiner ruled Oakes' death was caused by alcohol poisoning. Richmond police, campus police and the university launched investigations and VCU expelled the fraternity in

June 2021.

In September 2021, the university announced that it would ban alcohol at fraternity and sorority events, publish misconduct instances online and pause new member recruitment. On the same day, two investigations of university Greek life on campus were released, finding that there are concerns about hazing and binge drinking at the university and staff has struggled to address them.

"Just because their charges are dropped doesn't mean they're innocent," said Courtney White, a cousin of Adam Oakes. They could have saved Oakes' life by calling 911, she said. White invited the defendants to participate in the Oakes family's foundation, Love Like Adam, and work against hazing.

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATION HEARING ON PROPOSED ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDOR

The certification hearing, Application No. TA22-19, Division of Administrative Hearing No. 22-1246TL, originally scheduled for September 12, 2022, has been cancelled. In accordance with the Florida Electrical Transmission Line Siting Act, Section 403.527(6), F.S., on August 16, 2022, all parties to this proceeding stipulated that there are no disputed issues of material fact or law in this matter. Accordingly, on August 17, 2022 the administrative law judge issued an order granting a request to cancel the hearing and relinquish jurisdiction to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Pursuant to Section 403.529(1)(a), F.S., the Department of Environmental Protection will issue a final order within 40 days of the Administrative Law Judge's order.

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