

Flooding rains cause problems across southern Berks

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The sun returned to Berks County on Friday, allowing residents to begin cleaning up from the latest round of flooding rain.

Less than two weeks after Hurricane Irene, the region had to deal with the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee. Unlike the hurricane, this system stalled over the area, dumping large amounts of rain and resulting in flooded rivers and creeks.

Last Wednesday, a late afternoon storm dropped nearly three inches of rain in some parts of the area, leaving motorists stranded as roadways turned to rivers.

In Exeter Township, police closed Perkiomen Avenue, near Boscov's East for about 40 minutes, after water made the roadway impassable.

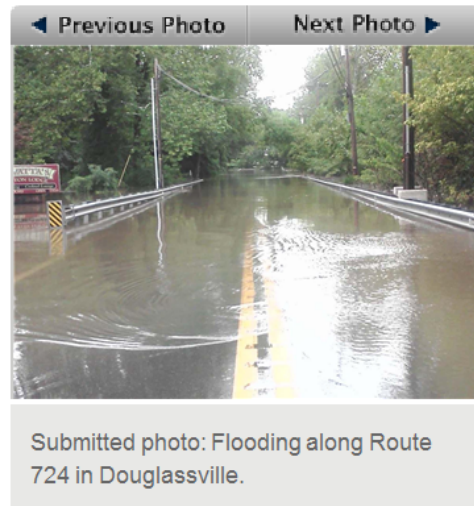
That squall was just part of a system that dropped more than eight inches of rain in southern Berks by Thursday night.

Daniel Boone Area School District officials dismissed the district's schools early on Thursday, closed school Friday and cancelled after school activities due to loading on area roadways.

AccuWeather senior meteorologist Henry Margusity described it as a "squeeze play" between the remnants of Lee and Hurricane Katia, which was well off the East Coast. He said Katia was preventing the remnants of the tropical storm from moving away.

As even higher amounts of rain fell in areas to the north of Berks County, officials began watching the Schuylkill River and area creeks.

In Birdsboro, the Hay Creek overflowed its banks, forcing the borough to close Route 724 between Mill and Spruce streets on Wednesday night, and then again Thursday night. Borough manager Aaron Durso said a state of emergency was declared in the borough on Thursday as a precaution. Route 724 in Birdsboro was re-opened late Friday afternoon. Durso said no evacuations were necessary in the borough.



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“During events like this, we stage certain things, like lining up crews and barricades, in anticipation of possible closures,” said Exeter Township Emergency Manager H. David Miller. “We compare historical data, and look at forecasts.”

Miller said that allows the township to place barricades ahead of time, to be ready in case they’re needed.

Miller added that the township’s Wastewater Treatment Plant, normally rated to handle 7.1 million gallons per day, was estimated to be handling 20 million gallons per day by Thursday afternoon.

“We are handling it,” he added.

In Amity Township, flooding caused closures of Main Street in Monocacy and River Bridge Road in Douglassville, as well as Monocacy Creek Road and the area surrounding the Waste Water Treatment Plant on Old Philadelphia Pike through Friday.

Township manager Charles E. Lyon said Thursday they were concerned about access to the plant. On Friday, he said workers were able to gain access to the plant, and worked through the day to prepare for to resume full operation.

Late Friday, Lyon said there were some areas in the township where damage from flooding was still being assessed.

The flooding rains forced the cancellation of the 35th annual Hay Creek Festival at Joanna Furnace.

“The ground was just so saturated, we felt we had to cancel,” said Linda Ott, president of the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association. “None of our buildings were damaged, but we do have some washout where the stream went over its banks, that we’ll have to repair.”

Ott said the Hay Creek Festival will not be re-scheduled.

“But we’re looking ahead to our Apple Festival on Oct. 8,” she added.