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### **As Iowa enters the 2018 flood season, the Iowa Flood Center stands ready to help**

In recent years, flooding and the damage that results from it have become all too common in Iowa. In the past 30 years, communities across the state have been hit hard by severe flooding, and as a result, Iowa has one of the highest number of flood-related presidential disaster declarations in the nation. With an estimated \$13.5 billion in flood-related property losses between 1988 and 2015, the impact of flooding in Iowa is real and must be taken seriously.

Fortunately, the Iowa Flood Center (IFC) at the University of Iowa, the nation's only center devoted solely to flood research, is here to help. With the 2018 flood season only weeks away—Flood Awareness Month begins on March 1—now is the time for Iowa communities to begin thinking about how to prepare for rising waters.

The IFC's Iowa Flood Information System (IFIS) (<http://ifis.iowafloodcenter.org/ifis/en>) is a free online suite of tools that allows all Iowans to access the latest local flood information. This user-friendly system displays up-to-the-minute community-specific information on rainfall, stream levels, and more, including:

- Current flood warnings and stream forecasts
- Real-time rainfall maps displaying current conditions and past accumulations
- Real-time and historical stream-level data
- Interactive visualizations

IFIS also provides flood inundation maps for 23 flood-prone communities across Iowa. These maps allow users to see what a forecasted flood crest would mean for their home or business. 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/Cedar Falls, and Waverly. The IFC develops new inundation maps every year, including at least two new maps this year for Plainfield and Clarksville.

In addition, IFIS now includes data from HAZUS, which allows users to estimate the cost of damage to buildings under various flooding scenarios. Developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), HAZUS models the effects of natural hazards such as flooding on structures in a given area, and then quantifies the total damage in dollars. HAZUS data is currently available for seven Iowa communities: Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City, Independence, Kalona, Rock Rapids, and Rock Valley. The IFC is working to expand the service to other Iowa communities.



“With extreme weather and flooding trends on the rise worldwide, now is the time to reinforce our flood forecasting and resilience efforts,” says Witold Krajewski, co-founder and director of the IFC. “My vision is to continually expand our services and to do more to serve Iowa and its people.”

With this in mind, the IFC is looking to expand its network of emergency management and research partners and is currently establishing new alliances with other states and communities across the nation. Recently, John Dorman, North Carolina’s assistant state emergency management director for risk management, visited the IFC to share information about flood modeling and forecasting technology. The end goal of any new partnership is to deliver the most advanced flood services to Iowa residents, says Krajewski.

“Flood control and mitigation are much less expensive than the economic loss, clean-up, and rebuilding that occurs as a result of a flood,” says Krajewski. “At the Iowa Flood Center, we are focused on being proactive and reducing the overall cost of flooding for Iowans across the state—in cities, towns, and small communities alike.”

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