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Storms, high winds slam Q-C area

New round of storms coming as Mississippi level on the rise again

Thomas Geyer
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A round of heavy storms slammed the Quad-City area Thursday, leaving thousands without power as high winds felled trees and power lines that blocked some roadways. The storm spawned at least one tornado that was reported by law enforcement near Prophetstown in Whiteside County. While another batch of strong storms is expected today, cooler and dryer days are ahead. After today, said Steve Kuhl, meteorologist in charge at the

ON A7
■ Tornadoes touch down in Oklahoma, Arkansas.
■ Televised tornado relief concert raises \$6 million.

National Weather Service, Davenport, “the system that’s given us all this rain will weaken and move off to the northeast leaving us with cooler and dryer air.” There is a 30 percent chance of rain and storms for Saturday with a high in the middle 70s, he said, “but Sunday it will be noticeably cooler with highs only in the middle 60s to lower 70s. Sunday night will be dry with lows in the 50s.” Monday will be mostly sunny with a high of about 70, he added.

The system that has slammed the Quad-Cities over the past week has been pumped full of warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico, giving it all the energy it needed to spark heavy storms, he said. The storm that rolled through the Quad-City region at about 5 p.m. Thursday packed winds of 50-60 mph, said meteorologist Tim Gross of the National Weather Service, Davenport. The winds felled trees in many areas of Davenport that brought down power lines, Davenport police said. The trees caused several streets to be closed. Police said three lanes were closed in the 2700 block of Brady Street for about two hours as city



Jeff Cook, QUAD-CITY TIMES

City of Davenport crews remove tree branches blown down by high winds and blocking Brady Street in Davenport late Thursday afternoon.

— STORMS | A3

PEERS CALL EDUCATOR ‘EXTRAORDINARY’



John Schultz photos, QUAD-CITY TIMES

Retiring third-grade teacher Diane Stensrud grabs another box to fill as she packs up a collection of materials in her classroom. She has been in teaching 43 years, 21 of those years at Eisenhower Elementary, Davenport.

Teacher turned classroom into creative palette

On a June day 43 years ago, Diane Stensrud took a taxi to the administrative offices of Davenport Community Schools. She told the driver to wait; she was applying for a job and told him, “It will either be ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

It was “yes,” and this week, Stensrud retired after a career that included having third-grade students in her Eisenhower Elementary School classroom build unexpected teaching tools such as a realistic log cabin, an almost full-size replica of Lindbergh’s “Spirit of St. Louis,” a Wild West ranch and a surgery center for dissecting a pig.

This spring, 114 Quad-City teachers are leaving their classrooms in retirement. Stensrud is one of them. All teachers are special, but Stensrud has been called extraordinary by her peers and parents. She dared to be different. She had earlier transferred to several other elementary schools but did not arrive at Eisenhower until 21 years ago. “That’s when my teaching took off,” she says. “Parents were hungry for creativity at Eisenhower School. They wanted their third-graders to get a special zip beyond the standbys.”



Bill Wundram



Stensrud walks toward the door on Wednesday with her flowers and an extra-large pencil, while taking things to her car.

She began using “out-of-the-box,” methods such as hocus-pocus magic to teach math, and soon was getting praise, honors and awards. Stensrud’s philosophy was beyond opening a book and carrying out routine studies. Her third-graders learned “Macbeth” while re-creating a street in Boston. The subject had to be acted out and learned, even if that meant weaving rugs for “Little House on the Prairie” or hammering birdhouses as a

study of Audubon. It all, according to the Stensrud methodology, “leads to learning math and art and skills that do not come from books alone.” Her principals often blinked but went along with her unique manner of teaching, with projects such as building the Lindbergh monoplane, with navigation instruments to fly over an imaginary Atlantic.

— WUNDRAM | A6

RDA proposal expected today

Emails show RDA officials unhappy with wording of draft news release

Kurt Allemeier
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A draft news release written earlier this month and described as a conceptual attempt to show benefits of a casino development favored by the city of Davenport caught the dismay of Riverboat Development Authority board members. The release, authored by City Administrator Craig Malin and shared with Mayor Bill Gluba and Quad-Cities Chamber of Commerce officials Tara Barney and Betsy Brandsgard and developer Rodney Blackwell, included quotes from Gluba, Barney, Blackwell and Gary Mohr, chairman of the RDA board.



Mohr

Mohr was angered that his name was attached to a quote he didn’t provide and could find its way to the media. RDA attorney Bob Gallagher asked that no such news release have the authority’s name attached to it.

The draft was among a string of emails between city and RDA officials released earlier this week by the city. The RDA meets at 1 p.m. today to hear the recommendation from a task force that weighed proposals that would include the purchase of the Rhythm City from Isle of Capri and developing a land-based casino. A special Davenport City Council meeting with only a closed session discussing litigation is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. today. Gluba declined to say what potential litigation is involved, but he noted the city previously has been involved in lawsuits with the Isle of Capri, owner of the Rhythm City.

Following up the draft release that was shared with the RDA subcommittee considering casino proposals, Malin tried to explain the release.

AT QCTIMES.COM
Read an email exchange between Davenport and Riverboat Development Authority officials regarding a casino development plan.

IF YOU GO
What: Riverboat Development Authority board meeting.
When: 1 p.m. today
Where: Kepky Building, Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds, 2815 W. Locust St., Davenport
Details: The RDA is expected to hear a recommendation about a proposed casino developer.

IF YOU GO
What: Davenport City Council special meeting
When: 5:30 p.m. today
Where: City Hall, 226 W. 4th St.
Details: The agenda says the council will go into closed session to discuss litigation.

— RDA | A3