City, residents battle floodwaters from near-record rainfall

Springfield/Greene County battled the waters from the rainstorm that worked its way through Springfield and the region beginning Saturday, Dec. 26, continuing steadily through Sunday, Dec. 27 and turning into flurries late Dec. 28.

At the request of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Red Cross opened an emergency shelter Dec. 28 at Dayspring Church, 2157 N. Prospect in Springfield, to house residents impacted by flooding. As of Dec. 29, the shelter’s census was 0 and closed for lack of need.

The 6.03 inches of rain Dec. 26 marked the second highest one-day total in Springfield history. The only wetter day on record was Nov. 24, 1987 when a storm produced 6.27 inches of rain in one day. Overall accumulation for the storm was expected to be between 7 and 12 inches.

There were two confirmed fatalities in Springfield/Greene County as a result of the flooding, and 11 fatalities statewide.

From midnight Dec. 26 to the afternoon of Dec. 28, there were 121 water rescues in Springfield/Greene County with 34 barricaded or closed streets in the city limits and 198 reports of water over roadways, including signal problems, in Springfield/Greene County.

2015 ends with as much intensity as it began

It comes as no real surprise that 2015 came to an end with as much intensity as it began. One more literal storm following 12 months of ups and downs that rival the most exhilarating of roller coasters.

Sometimes I wish someone would stop me at the gate and tell me I’m not tall enough to ride the ride. That used to happen quite frequently, as I was the kid bound for adventure, but always short for my age. But then again, if I were warned of the ride ahead and pointed away into another direction, where is the fun in that? And we all know that with the peaks in life, there are always the valleys.

Serving as a communication professional and public servant is rewarding and humbling. I don’t save lives directly like so many of my public safety colleagues do. However, I do work alongside them, and they are awe-inspiring. And there are so many unsung heroes among City employees in all departments that I have made it a mission to share their stories with you.

I feel a strong, personal obligation to help others and to do my part, which is to provide timely, accurate, and understandable information in a venue where all residents can feel comfortable sharing their challenges and celebrations with us. I have a great public information staff of individuals who never tire of bringing these stories to life. Any time we can do something that helps make Springfield a

Eagle Days
Learn about eagles and other migratory birds nesting near the shore of Lake Springfield. Bring binoculars, telephoto cameras or small telescopes, or use equipment provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Indoor eagle programs, crafts and activities also offered by MDC staff and Dickerson Park Zoo at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center. Located at Lake Springfield Boathouse, Saturday, Jan. 16, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 17, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Free.

Daddy-Daughter Dance
Friday, February 19, 6-9 p.m., Northview Senior Center. Enjoy dinner, music dancing and a photo with your special guest (can be dad, stepdad, grandpa, uncle or other special guy). 3 years and up. $40/couple and $15 for each additional girl.

SPRINGFIELD CITY EMPLYEE NEWS EXTRA
January 2016

Beyond the Scales
Weight Watchers at Work informational meeting Jan. 11.

2015 Chief of the Year
SPD’s Chief Paul Williams presented Missouri Police award.

Fire Department
ISO rating improves 5 points.
better place to live, work and play, we go home happy people.

I am blessed to have a birds-eye view of the goings on at City Hall and the great fortune to participate in local government. It’s not exactly what you think it is; it’s so much more. It’s fast-paced, intense, surprising, tedious, exciting, boring, stressful and heart warming. Sometimes it’s even shocking. I’ll save those details for a later column.

I tear up anytime anyone takes their oath of office and I am the first in line to greet new employees because I can’t wait to tell them how great their experience can be. If they choose to let it be. I’m also proud to work alongside the best City Manager anywhere, Greg Burris. I’m convinced he works 22 hours a day (he has to nap sometime, or I would be convinced he works 24 hours) and he never turns his back on anyone in need. Ever. He chooses ethics over convenience and is constantly looking for new ways to do things better or better ways to do new things. Getting inside the mind of Greg Burris may be another topic for another time.

Since my first day at the City, almost four years ago, I have also greatly admired the Mayor and members of City Council. These are dedicated, hard-working people who volunteer their time to put in often 40 hours a week doing a sometimes thankless job inside a fishbowl where everyone has the opportunity to criticize their every move. Getting to know these elected officials has also been a highlight of my time at the City.

Does everyone always get along? Just like any other large organization, of course not. Do things always go smoothly inside the fishbowl? Certainly not, but not every organization operates in a spotlighted fishbowl. However, it is a remarkable feeling to know we give it our best and end each evening, each month, each year, with the hope that what lies ahead is smoother sailing.

My dad gave me a book that I have kept since I was 12 years old and in it, the last entry by the incomparable poet Robert Browning, has always stuck with me:

The Year is closed, the record made,
The last deed done, the last word said,
The memory alone remains,
Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains,
And now with purpose full and clear,
We turn to meet another year.

Cora Scott is Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement for the City of Springfield.

SPD commanders attend prestigious Department of Justice program focused on protecting Springfield children

Springfield Police Chief Paul Williams and five of the Springfield Police Department’s other commanders completed the Missing Children Seminar for Chief Executives (CEO) hosted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). This seminar, typically held at NCMEC headquarters just outside Washington, D.C., was held at the Springfield-Greene County Public Safety Center, who donated the use of their classroom space.

Police chiefs, sheriffs and other law enforcement commanders were invited to attend the 2-day CEO seminar held Dec. 7-8. Chief Williams, Majors Kirk Manlove and Jim McCulloch, Captains David Millsap and Ben King and Sergeant Jason Laub joined 41 other law enforcement executives who attended the 163rd session of the CEO course, and they are now some of more than 6,000 who have completed this training.

“It was an honor to have NCMEC bring the training to us here in Springfield,” said Chief Williams. “The knowledge they share benefits not only us in law enforcement. In turn, it benefits the citizens of Springfield.”

The Missing Children Seminar for Chief Executives was designed to provide attendees a better understanding of the issue of missing and sexually exploited children, how to specifically deal with the situation of a child who has been reported missing when time is critical, and how to access a multitude of resources available to assist in these cases.

Once candidates are selected to attend, training expenses are covered by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children through a grant provided by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Created in 1997, the CEO training discusses the needed steps in implementing best practices for call takers, responding officers, investigators and command staff.
A Note from Greg Burris

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all City employees who have played any part in responding to the severe flooding our community has experienced over the past few days.

Many take for granted the response you provide. I want to make sure you are thanked for your outstanding work assisting our citizens and others in the area.

At the risk of leaving out any of our “first responders”...

Thank you to the Emergency Communications “911” Department — you are the first call people make when they need help, and you coordinate the response.

Thank you to the Office of Emergency Management for coordinating our community’s response to the rains and flooding, including working with other agencies to establish an emergency shelter for those in need.

Thank you to the Fire Department for your many water rescues, road closures and other actions to both save lives and keep people safe.

Thank you to the Police Department for your work responding to calls in torrential rains and assisting motorists.

Thank you to Public Works for responding to flooding incidents throughout our City facilities (including the entire basement of the Busch Building), clearing debris and coordinating road closures and managing the traffic operations center.

Thank you to Environmental Services for managing a system overwhelmed by stormwater that infiltrated our capacity.

Thank you to the Department of Public Information for keeping our citizens informed about the situation, our response and their options.

Thank you to the Springfield-Greene County Health Department for keeping the animals at the shelter safe, even while the shelter flooded.

Thank you to the Parks Department for your response to flooding at golf courses and other park facilities.

Thank you to the Springfield-Branson National Airport staff for arranging to get flights in and out of Springfield during untenable conditions.

Thank you to the Risk Management and Finance teams for helping manage the payments for clean-up and reimbursements for our losses.

Thank you to the City Clerk’s Office for rescuing the drowning archive files in the basement of Historic City Hall.

Thank you to the Finance Department and IS Department for withstanding the flooded conditions in the Busch Building’s basement. We will try to get your workspaces dried out as quickly as possible to minimize the inconvenience.

My apologies if I’ve missed anyone or any department — I know EVERY department and EVERY employee has been impacted in some way by the rains. I truly appreciate everything you have done and continue to do to respond to this situation. I know our citizens do, too.

Clean-up efforts update for Busch Building lower level

Thank you for your patience as Public Works continues the clean-up efforts taking place in the basement of the Busch Building. Here are some key points to update everyone:

- Meeting room availability: Public Works estimates the clean-up project will take 8+ weeks. Every effort is being made to have L45 and L46 meeting rooms available by March 7. It will be the responsibility of those who have scheduled meetings prior to March 7 to relocate their meetings and notify the attendees of the new location.
- The 4th Floor Conference Room renovations are being pushed back during this 8+ week clean-up, so it will remain available for use until March 4. Please note both L45 and the 4th Floor Conference room will not be under renovation at the same time, and these dates could be revised as we near completion. Renovations for the 4th Floor Conference Room will not start until after the Lower Level is completed.
- Members of the Finance Department will temporarily relocate to the second floor of City Hall. Members of Information Systems that currently office in Lower Level will be relocating to various locations. Additional information on their temporary locations will be shared once finalized. All phone extensions will remain the same.
- The 2 East Conference Room will be reserved during renovations for additional storage space and, thus, should not be scheduled for meetings during this time.
Missouri Police Chiefs Association names SPD Chief Paul Williams 2015 Chief of the Year

At its annual meeting in Jefferson City Dec. 10, the Missouri Police Chiefs Association (MPCA) presented Springfield Police Chief Paul Williams with the 2015 Award, said MPCA President Drew Juden.

Williams joined the Springfield Police Department in 2010, after retiring from the Tulsa Police Department after 29 years of service with the rank of major.

In Springfield, Williams immediately instituted a department-wide philosophy of community-based policing. Throughout his career, he has embraced innovative concepts to improve service to citizens, as well as those that improve internal operations.

Williams is adept at establishing community partnerships, and is known as a facilitator and consensus builder, enjoying the interaction between the police and citizens that helps forge a proactive environment to enhance public safety. He encourages open and honest communication to build and maintain trust within the police department, and has consistently worked with other agencies and elected officials to accomplish common goals.

Williams holds a master’s degree in criminal justice administration from Northeastern Oklahoma University and a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Northern Michigan University. He graduated from the Police Executive Research Forum’s Senior Management Institute of Police in 2009 and the 207th FBI National Academy.

Williams instructs criminal justice courses at Missouri State University and the University of Phoenix, is certified as an instructor for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Leadership in Police Organizations program, and is a state certified law enforcement instructor.

At the state level, Williams serves as a governor’s appointee to the board of the Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training program and the Missouri Crime Laboratory Review Commission, and as vice president for MPCA.

Williams serves on the Springfield-Greene County 911 board, Combined Ozarks Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement Team, Southwest Chief of Police Association and has served on the board of directors for United Way of the Ozarks, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Ozarks Fighting Back, and Code 3 Sertoma, as well as volunteering for numerous advisory boards and councils and coaching youth sports.

Williams and his family are active members of Redeemer Lutheran Church. He and his wife, Regina, have three children and one granddaughter.

“Congratulations, Chief Williams! We are proud to have you on our team and leading public safety efforts in our community,” said City Manager Greg Burris.

Follow the GOLDEN GOOSE

I am presenting the Golden Goose Award to Nicki Woods as a sincere representation of my appreciation for all the help she has given over the past years. She is always there with an answer to every question and request for help. If she doesn’t know the answer immediately (which very seldom happens), she gets back to me as soon as possible with the solution. She is always patient and kind with every request. I appreciate her willingness to give every bit of help she can. I am so pleased to be able to show her that she is very much appreciated for all she does.

Lesleigh Horton, Environmental Services

I would like to present the Golden Goose to Kara Daniel. Kara was very patient, kind and helpful to me when I was new at the City of Springfield several years ago and still is to this day. Additionally, she is a very generous person with her time and dedication to the City of Springfield programs. She participates in the Employee Activities Committee; she assists in raising funds for the Employee Crisis Committee, and for the past two years has worked extremely hard to put together the Employee Craft Show to benefit the Crisis Fund. She steps up to the plate when needed with a smile on her face. For this reason, I am passing the Golden Goose on to Kara.

Nicki Woods, Information Systems

I am honored to pass the Golden Goose award to Chris Edwards in Building Development Services. Chris and I have worked together on numerous projects over the years. Chris has always gone above and beyond, been extremely helpful, and has always been a pleasure to work with. Together we’ve streamlined a very tedious process. I appreciate her positive can-do attitude and her contributions to making all of our projects successful. Thank you, Chris, for all you do for the City of Springfield.

Kara Daniel, Finance

I am pleased to have the opportunity to pass the Golden Goose to Duke McDonald. I appreciate Duke’s positive attitude, his support and good advice as attorney for the BDS department. His knowledge and professionalism, and the fact that he is an outstanding person, both personally and professionally has helped make the Dangerous Building program a success.

Christi Edwards, Building Development Services
SPD’s Officer Mark Priebe recognized by Special Olympics Missouri

Officer Mark Priebe of the Springfield Police Department was named the “Outstanding Unsung Hero in Region 3” by the Statewide Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) for Special Olympics Missouri. The state’s top achievers were recognized on Dec. 10 at a ceremony in Jefferson City, Mo. “Mark is so very deserving of the Unsung Hero award, and I truly enjoy having him as part of our LETR family,” said Crystal Schuster of Special Olympics Missouri. Region 3 represents the southwest area of Missouri. Priebe works tirelessly year-round with Special Olympics Missouri to raise funds and awareness for the athletes through a variety of events. Next up is the Polar Plunge on Jan. 30. Priebe is helping lead these efforts and has recruited a team from SPD to take the plunge once again this year.

LETR was founded by the Missouri Police Chiefs Association (MPCA) 29 years ago and is the organization’s largest grassroots fundraising program in the state. Special Olympics is law enforcement’s charity of choice, not only in Missouri, but throughout the United States and in 46 countries worldwide.

The LETR Awards Ceremony recognized individual and department efforts during the 12-month period of Sept. 1, 2014 through Aug. 31, 2015. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the Missouri Police Chiefs Association mid-year conference and also kicked off 2016 efforts.

Special Olympics Missouri is a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. More than 16,000 athletes participate in 21 Olympic-type sports throughout the state. Special Olympics provides athletes with continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy as they participate in the sharing of gifts and friendship with other athletes, their families and the community. For more information, visit somo.org.

Springfield Fire Department’s ISO rating improves 5 points

The Springfield Fire Department has received the final results of the community’s recent formal Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluation. The department is pleased to announce that out of 100 possible points, Springfield received 86.06 points, a five-point improvement over four years ago. This score allow the City of Springfield to maintain its excellent Class 2/2X ISO rating.

ISO rates communities on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the best possible fire protection and 10 being almost no fire protection. The evaluation consists of three areas: the fire department, the water supply, and the communications system. The evaluation of the fire department accounts for 50 percent of the rating, while the evaluation of the water supply accounts for 40 percent, and the department’s communication and 911 system accounts for the final 10 percent.

Out of 100 possible points, Springfield received 86.06 points. A Class 2 rating falls between 80 points and 89.99 points. Anything less than 80 points would have resulted in a Class 3 rating, and anything over 89.99 would result in a Class 1 rating.

Previously, the community received 81.06 points, so there has been a full five point increase in the past four years. The additional Class 2x rating is a supplemental rating for those areas in the City without a fire hydrant within 1,000 feet. There is only small amount of area within the City that falls in this classification, and most of that is undeveloped property.

Fire Chief David Hall attributes the improved score to fire prevention efforts, most notably having a strong fire safety education program, fire codes and fire investigation program.

“We’re extremely pleased about maintaining the Class 2 rating and proud of the work the department has done to get to this point,” said Chief Hall. “We made a commitment during our 2011 evaluation that we would continue to work with the community to make improvements in protecting the lives and property of our citizens. We feel this evaluation is a reflection of our community’s commitment to fire protection.”

What’s something you’ve learned since working for the City?
I’ve learned a lot more about what all goes into the everyday operation of such a vast and diverse organization. From the outside looking in, it’s very difficult to comprehend everything that goes on throughout the City’s expansive network of departments.

What’s the hardest part of your job?
My time is split between two different departments (Workforce and PIO). Because of this, the hardest part of my job is probably trying to balance my time and priorities to ensure that everything gets done in a timely fashion.

What gives you satisfaction?
My greatest satisfaction always comes from performing meaningful work. Whenever I’m working on a project, it helps for me to imagine the direct and indirect benefits to the community yielded because of my efforts. I think the best work stems from the potential of a meaningful result.

Do you work to live, or do you live to work? Why?
I think most of us naturally work so that we can live. However, I feel like the way we work and the type of work that we do directly influences the quality of our life outside of work. When you can go home in the evenings and feel good about the work you’ve done and the impact you’ve made, it brings a sense of accomplishment and confidence that transfers over to your life outside of work. So I don’t think it’s either one of the two for me, it would be more of a combination of the two because of the way they directly correlate with one another.
Looking for old barns to tear down for the lumber to build furniture. We will clear everything from the site as a benefit to the property owner. Please contact Olivia at 417-849-0865.

FOR SALE

‘95 Ford Conquest –$13,000 (Ozark, MO)  
‘95 Conquest in excellent condition; well taken care of and maintained. New tires, new generator and stove. New batteries.  
Call Rex or Vera at (417) 818-4586.  

Golf Clubs, 3-PW, SW/UW, bag and driver. $75, call 848-8450, ask for Phil.  

Large L-shaped simulated cherry office desk with beautiful matching hutch from office depot ($200.00). Solid oak entertainment center with pull-out swivel television holder, including a 31” TV, and lots of cabinet space and built to last a life time ($250.00). Contact Joe at 343-3117.  

Pin Up Salon Company at 219 E. Commercial Street is now taking new clients! Come on in on your lunch or on your day off and get pampered! We have clipper artists to get you looking fresh, we have beauty operators to get you looking gorgeous, and best of all: show your City badge and we will give you a 15% discount on any and all services!  

Call 417-865-3089 and ask for Dixie to schedule your appointment today!
City Finance Department receives budget presentation award

For the eighth year in a row, the City of Springfield Finance Department has received the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation award for its budget. The GFOA is a professional organization servicing the needs of 18,300 appointed and elected local, state and provincial-level government officials and finance practitioners.

In order to receive the budget award, the City had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well the City’s budget serves as a policy document, financial plan, an operations guide and a communications device.

There are four areas and a total of 35 criteria upon which the document is rated. In order to receive the award, budgets must be rated “proficient” in all four categories, and the 14 mandatory criteria within those categories in order to receive the award. For the City’s FY 2015 document, 10 criteria were ranked “outstanding,” the highest level of achievement.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

To: Brady Wormington

FF Wormington traveled to Station 2 today to work off the truck. I found him a very good and proficient firefighter. He particularly impressed me at the store. In the check out line, an elderly women in front of us needed help taking her groceries out to her car. Before I even knew what had been said he told the checker that he would take her groceries out for her. I was very impressed and it stood out to me as an excellent example of interacting with the public in such a positive way.

Sincerely,
Daron B. Evans, Captain, TK02

To: Springfield Fire Department

Our family had a brief yet meaningful encounter with an SGF fire truck today. My kids waved from our car and a firefighter came over and gave them a sticker. A simple yet meaningful thing to do. It totally made OUR day. In the wake of everything going on these days, it is SO refreshing to see these type of gestures. Our 5 year old daughter stated that this was her ‘bucket’ full (quote from a children’s book to gage how you are feeling) and our 8 year old son said: “things like this want to make me a fire fighter”.

We have celebrated our children’s birthdays in community rooms in the past and had the privilege to interact with members of the fire department in community events before but this truly felt like a random act of kindness. Funny thing is that we were on our way to drop a donation. My son stated: “mom, we are doing an act of good and in return something good comes back at us”.

In a serendipity kind of way, we were able to reinforce values we are hoping to instill in our children. Thank you all – especially Fire Station 7 – for everything that you do for our community. Just a little reminder that small things do matter.

In gratitude, The MACs

To: Captain Ben King

While driving home, I see a car that ran out of gas stuck in the right lane, slowing traffic. As I get closer, I see an officer helping out and filling the gas tank for the lady who owns the vehicle. I was impressed. It’s nice to see officers stop to help people and keep them safe. I have always had great experiences with Springfield PD, and I have heard stories like this before. I am thankful for all the men and women who protect us. You have my respect and appreciation.

Sincerely,
Zach, Springfield

To: Keith Bachman and Crissy Posthlewait, 9-1-1 Telecommunicators

On Dec. 8th, 9-1-1 Emergency Communications received a call for stealing at a Walmart where shots were fired. Several officers responded, perimeters were set, area businesses were called and the Missouri State Highway Patrol responded to assist. Everyone at Emergency Communications worked to help each other and assist the officers with what they needed. Lieutenant Fred Beck, Springfield Police Department, called in later to pass along his gratitude to 9-1-1 Emergency Communications for their assistance during this incident.

Lieutenant Fred Beck
Springfield Police Department

To: Tessa Peterson, 9-1-1 Telecommunicator

On Dec. 27, Assistant Fire Chief Pennington, Springfield Fire Department, complimented Tessa Peterson on how amazing and calm she was during the rainy weather event as she was working the Municipal Fire Channel.

To: Summer Wildhaber, Tessa Peterson, James Stater, Sara Meier, Drew Meyer, Marleen Maupin, Kelsey Eick, Kayla Smith, Crissy Posthlewait, Dave Garrett, Jared Bottorff, Andrew Bick, Keith Bachman, Jordan Lurten, Holly Wicker, R. J. Woolard, Amy McCown and Andrew Crocker, 9-1-1 Telecommunicators

Kristina Scott, Kevin Patton, Terry Hedden and Kristina Webster, 9-1-1 Shift Supervisors

On Dec. 26 and 27, 9-1-1 Emergency Communications was extremely busy with the wet-weather-related calls and flooding issues throughout the county. Several compliments were received for everyone working during this event from our user agencies letting us know what a great job 9-1-1 personnel were all doing. During this time frame, 9-1-1 telecommunicators and Shift Supervisors handled nearly 2000 9-1-1 calls with an additional 650 administrative calls. This is an approximate 120% increase in 9-1-1 calls as compared to 2014. These calls included water rescue calls, flooded streets, power lines down, car crashes, tornadoes, as well as the normal call volume.

Deputy Brian McComb, Greene County Sheriff’s Office Firefighter Kyle Correa, West Republic Fire Protection District Assistant Fire Chief David Pennington, Springfield Fire Department Deputy Chief Scott Moore, Battlefield Fire Protection District

To: Troy Cooley, 9-1-1 Telecommunicator

On Dec. 24, Troy Cooley answered a 9-1-1 call where the caller requested an officer because someone was banging on his door at 3 a.m. Troy stayed on the line with the caller until the officer arrived. Michael, the 9-1-1 caller, stated this was very comforting as he was alone and very appreciative of the service provided by Troy.