

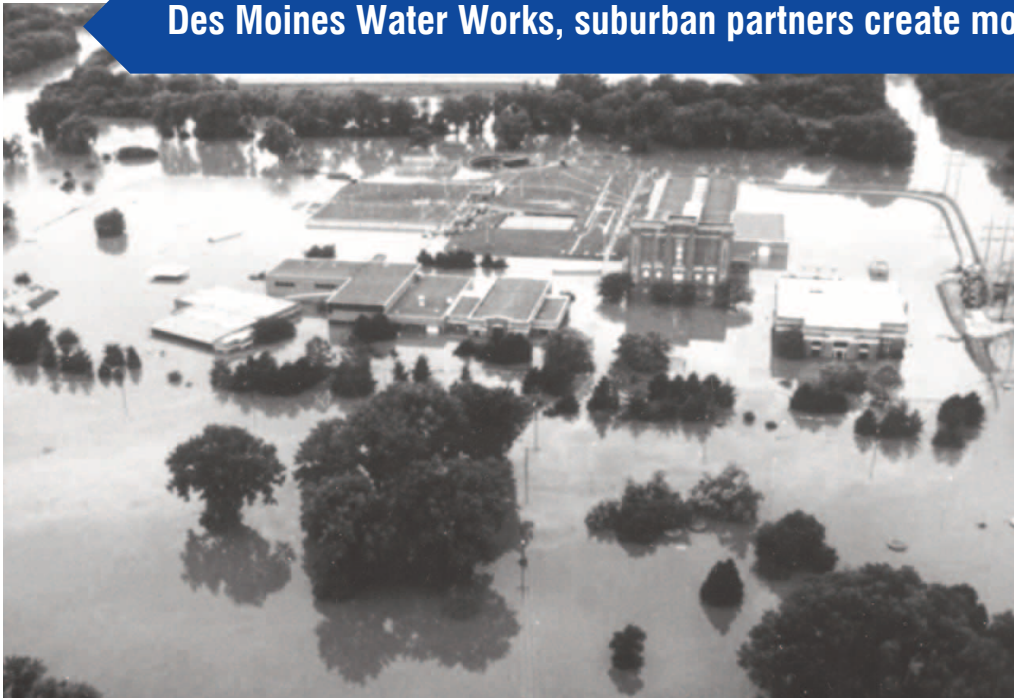
News and Updates from
Des Moines Water Works
JULY 2023

H₂O LINE

THINK DOWNSTREAM

30 Years Later: Remembering the Flood of 1993

Des Moines Water Works, suburban partners create more resilient drinking water system



Des Moines Water Works has made significant investments in flood protection, additional treatment plants and drinking water treatment infrastructure to develop a resilient drinking water system for central Iowa.

Some of this was a result of growth of the metro; some, the catastrophic Flood of 1993 in which central Iowa was hit with a deluge of rain – six to 10 inches of rain on Thursday, July 8, 1993, in the Raccoon River watershed – after what had been a wet spring that already had the Des Moines River at flood stage.

Des Moines Water Works officials knew the rising Raccoon River was threatening the Fleur Drive Treatment Plant. The levee was closed at 1 a.m. July 9, 1993.

“At midnight, I knew we were going to lose the plant,” recalls L.D. McMullen, who was the CEO and General Manager at the time. “Water was starting to come over the levee, and they were still forecasting it to go higher.”

At 3 a.m. L.D. got a call from an employee standing in ankle deep water asking if they could shut down the plant. The decision was made to shut down as much electrical equipment as possible to try to reduce damage to it.

The treatment plant was officially considered lost to flood waters at 3:02 a.m. July 11. The river crested at 7 a.m. at 26.8 feet.

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Flood scenes from 1993 — clockwise from top left: Flood waters engulf Des Moines Water Works; an employee uses a boat to travel around the treatment plant; inside the flooded pump station.

Des Moines
Water Works
Water You Can Trust for **Life**

'Water' We Up To? DMWW News in Brief

Apply Today for the William G. Stowe Citizen Water Academy

Join Des Moines Water Works for a behind-the-scenes look at how we ensure central Iowans have access to the water they need, plus participate in discussions about bottled water and the value of tap water, water protection policy, partnerships to improve water quality, and much more.

The Academy takes place part of each Thursday in October 2023, including on Imagine a Day Without Water in which we will discuss access to water, water affordability and other issues related to equity.

It's free to apply and attend – learn more here: citizenwateracademy.com. The deadline to apply is Aug. 31. Those who are accepted will be notified by Sept. 7.

DMWW releases annual Consumer Confidence Report

We are proud to report to you that Des Moines Water Works meets all state and federal requirements for safe drinking water. Despite source water quality challenges, we have the expertise and technology to treat raw water so that when you turn on your tap, you are drinking safe, affordable water.

View our full 2023 Consumer Confidence Report here: bit.ly/2023waterqualityreport

Water You Waiting For?

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
FULL BENEFITS
INCLUDING IPERS
[DMWW.COM/CAREERS](https://dmww.com/careers)**

Continued from front page: 30 years later

"There was a real sadness as there is with anything you've worked hard on and you're going to lose," L.D. remembers about the time. "But then immediately we shifted to recovery and how we were going to get the plant back up and operational."

The media and public wanted to know when there would be water again – L.D. said seven days; a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency employee told him he'd be lucky for the plant to be going again in 30 days. Then, he had to convince elected leaders to let the Des Moines Water Works' team of experts lead the recovery and rebuild of the plant.

Private businesses stepped in to provide parts and equipment. Des Moines Water Works employees – some of whom had lost their own homes and belongings to flood waters – worked tirelessly to assess the damage, dewater the plant and clean up, troubleshoot solutions and create a temporary plant and piping system. Within five days, the treatment plant was started.

Post-flood efforts create resiliency

Metro partners came together and decided the system needed to be more resilient. The L.D. McMullen Treatment Plant was constructed at Maffitt Reservoir in 2000. The Saylorville Water Treatment

Flood of '93 Memory

I was living in Urbandale at that time and working at Kmart. I worked eight days in a row because many of my coworkers could not go to work due to flood waters. We sold a lot of water and trash cans. People who lost a lot were given clothing vouchers of \$500. — Kathy Knapp

Plant opened in 2010. Suburban partners contributed \$70 million to the construction of those plants, aquifer storage and recovery wells and other infrastructure.

Among some of the other updates are a higher levee system (six feet higher), installation of flood gates, the construction of a second story for the General Office, and the addition of a stormwater pump station to help pump out water from inside the levee at the Fleur Drive Treatment Plant. Both the flood gates and the higher

levee were key to protecting the Fleur plant during the 2008 flood, when the Raccoon River rose to 24.66 feet.

In addition, there is now a more enhanced river gauge monitoring system with instantaneous readings that can be monitored remotely to help predict the threat of flooding farther upstream.

Read more memories from the 1993 flood on Facebook: Des Moines Water Works, and Instagram: dsmh2o in the coming weeks.

Flood of '93 Memory

My family moved to Des Moines in summer 1993. As we drove across the state en route to our new home, my mother commented that, while Iowa did not have as many lakes as we were used to, they sure had some beautiful rivers!

Two weeks after we moved into our new home, those beautiful rivers dramatically spilled their banks and the Water Works flooded. We lost all access to clean running water. We were reduced to taking a trip to a nearby pond with our garbage bins, filling them with water, and carefully driving back to our house so that we could flush our toilets once a day.

To top it all off, our basement with much of our stuff still in boxes flooded! To this day, my mom puts everything stored in the basement in plastic boxes.

We didn't let it scare us though, most of us still live in the area 30 years later. — Andrew Carter