

# e-Edition Plus

A current events feature for teaching with electronic editions.

By Sara Shahriari

## Recovery from floods could take months, or even years

The great Mississippi River is a life-line for the people who live and work near it.

Crops are nourished by its water and soil, cargo is transported up and down its length, and fish and shellfish are farmed on its banks.

But when the Mississippi runs out of control, it can be a great danger to the people who make its banks their home.

This spring, the Mississippi has gone out of control in record-setting ways. And it will take months, if not years, for people to recover.

The problems began when storms and tornadoes swept the central United States with heavy rains that combined with melting snow to put too much water into the Mississippi.

The water in the Mississippi — and the rivers that feed into it — rose and rose, flooding cities, towns and thousands of acres of farmland.

The water rose so high that engineers opened spillway gates along the river, flooding even more land in an effort to protect cities like New Orleans farther downstream.

Thousands of people have been forced to evacuate their homes, and thousands more have lost their jobs — at least temporarily — because the places they work are under water.

The damage extends into every part of life.

Food crops like corn and soybeans are ruined because their fields are under water. Gas and food prices are expected to rise, because supplies and deliveries have been delayed or interrupted.

And state governments, already short of money, have little to give

homeowners and businesses to help them recover.

### Billions in damage

Repairing damage from the floods could cost billions of dollars. From Memphis, Tennessee, south to Louisiana, damage to homes, businesses, crops and local economies could total \$9 BILLION, The New York Times reported last week.

To recover from the floods, farmers will try to replant crops, and businesses and homeowners will rebuild. But all that work will take money.

People whose homes were insured will get payments from insurance agencies to help them rebuild. For people without insurance, the future is uncertain.

Government agencies can help them

with emergency supplies and loans, but it is not yet clear how much.

### Huge system

The Mississippi River runs down the center of the United States, from Minnesota in the north to Louisiana in the south, where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi and the rivers that feed into it make up the largest river system in North America.

The barges that ship goods up and down the river are hugely important to the nation's economy and businesses. So the entire nation is watching to see how long recovery from the flooding will take.

A single barge can carry products or materials that would fill 70 trucks. And even though barges float, they are affected by flooding.

The waters have been so high, The New York Times reported last week, that the markers that barge captains look for to travel safely are under water and can't be seen.

ZUMA Press/Newscom



Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes in mobile home parks and other areas when floodwaters overflowed the Mississippi River. Thousands also lost their jobs.

# Talk About the News

- In Louisiana, the state government told people to leave their homes in areas where bad flooding was expected. Some people chose not to leave. Do you think that the government should have the power to force people to leave their homes to protect their safety, or do people have the right to stay in a dangerous place if they decide to? Discuss how much power governments should have over people's personal decisions. Talk about what you think your family would do in such a situation.

Learning Standards: Engaging peers in constructive conversations about topics of interest or importance; responding to visual, written and electronic texts by making connections to students' lives and the lives of others.

# Explore Your e-Edition

- The Mississippi River floods have destroyed many businesses and homes. Find a story in the e-Edition about people who are trying to rebuild after a natural disaster like the Mississippi flooding. Or find an example online. Read the story and then list three challenges people face in the recovery process. Then list ways they might meet each challenge. Share your ideas with the class.

Learning Standards: Exploring and reflecting on universal themes and substantive issues from written, visual and electronic texts; posing social science questions; conducting research to find answers to the questions posed.

- Natural disasters like tornadoes, earthquakes and floods happen in many parts of the world. Find a story about a natural disaster in the e-Edition. Read the story and write a paragraph discussing what you think people in the affected area could do to be prepared the next time there is a natural disaster where they live.

Learning Standards: Acquiring information from multiple sources and then organizing and analyzing the information; posing local, state and national policy issues as questions; posing social science questions; researching and writing to answer the questions.

- Floods have a huge affect on land and buildings. Look through the photos in today's e-Edition for one showing a neighborhood, street or outdoor area. Make a list of everything that would be affected in the photo if a flood filled the area shown.

Learning Standards: Using written and visual texts to identify and research issues of importance that confront adolescents, their community and the nation; acquiring information from multiple sources and then organizing and presenting it.

# How Well Did You Read?

Understanding what you read is a skill that will help you all your life. Review the story about Mississippi flooding by answering the questions below.

1. What does the word "evacuate" mean?
  - A. To flood an area that is dangerous
  - B. To move from a dangerous area to a safer area
  - C. To lose money because of a natural disaster
  - D. To open flood gates on a river
2. What is a factor the story says contributed to the Mississippi floods?
  - A. Glaciers melting
  - B. Lakes overflowing
  - C. Tornadoes and storms
  - D. Earthquakes
3. What are some of the businesses the story says have been hurt by the floods?
  - A. Farms and barge companies
  - B. Transport and airports
  - C. Oil refineries and mines
  - D. Mines and airports
4. How much damage does the story say was done by Mississippi flooding in dollars?
  - A. \$199 billion
  - B. \$19 billion
  - C. \$9 billion
  - D. \$9 million
5. In what state does the Mississippi River end?
  - A. Mississippi
  - B. Arkansas
  - C. Louisiana
  - D. Missouri

