

Rain, rain, more rain, and maybe even more on the way



The road washed out on Cedar near the Presbyterian Church.



Many streets in Ajo resembled rivers and few people could get to their cars with dry feet.

WEATHER REPORT

TEMPERATURES	Max	Min
Sunday, Sept. 2	106°	81°
Monday, Sept. 3	98°	78°
Tuesday, Sept. 4	96°	73°
Wednesday, Sept. 5	99°	52°
Thursday, Sept. 6	94°	70°

Last week a total of 3.55 inches of rain was recorded by Freepport-McMoRan during the week with 7.27 inches of rain recorded since January. Other local weather watchers have reported even more rain.

For the coming week, expect mostly cloudy skies with a chance of rain, highs in the 90s and lows in the 80s according to *weather.com* online.



Jose Yon faced a major challenge at the school where stairwells at the auditorium filled up with water.



The ceiling at the Betancourts' business was no match for the heavy rain.

Photos were taken to the Ajo Copper News by Lito Castillo & Hop David while Crystal Thomas Ramirez & Kattie Allen sent several used on Facebook.

More than half the annual rainfall average for the area fell on Ajo and surrounding locales between Thursday of last week and Monday. Rain gauges registered roughly 4.5 inches on average, and forecasters predicted a 60% chance of more showers through Wednesday.

While water from the sky is normally more welcome than flowers on Mothers Day, this time it was a bit too much.

At Desert Senita Community Health Center, rainwater sweeping across the street backed up in flowerbeds at the base of the building and caused seepage under the front wall. A significant amount of water made its way into the business offices and a lesser amount into the lab, according to CEO Fran Driver. Both areas were cleaned up by Sunday afternoon. The center's fitness room in the former ambulance maintenance bay flooded through the bay doors and the side door but no equipment was damaged. A couple minor leaks became apparent as they made their way down a roof vent, but neither damaged the ceiling because they came through overhead speakers. Driver said the immediate plan is to repair the landscaping around the building and allow for some drainage through the bed curbs.

A tree fell on a car in the DSCHC parking lot. The vehicle appeared undamaged and was driven out from under the tree.

At Ajo Unified School District, two elementary classrooms were flooded ankle deep as water seeped through the south walls. A small lake formed along the south wall of Dicus Auditorium. Principal Brian MacKenzie noted that much of the water drained into a stairwell outside the double doors, to a height of 4 feet. The doors held back most of the water but some seeped in, soaking several hundred square feet of carpet in front of the stage.

MacKenzie said that Jose Yon and his crew of maintenance men and custodians performed heavy manual labor to remove the water as they worked into the evening on Thursday. He added that Mike Mason of Ajo Improvement Company and several members of Ajo/Gibson Volunteer Fire Department brought generators and pumps to aid in removing several hundred gallons of water from the auditorium.

School was cancelled on Friday because at 6:30 a.m., when the decision was made, there was still no power in the Ajo Improvement Company part of town. MacKenzie said the administration had no way of knowing that power would be restored by 8 a.m. and he noted the school will have to make up the lost day. Yon's maintenance crew continued cleanup efforts on Friday, assisted by two volunteers.

A rumor that someone was swept away in the wash by the Presbyterian Church turned out to be unfounded. Pima County Sheriff's Department reported no injuries in the Ajo area. Sgt. Zack Rapaich noted that SAVs put in extra time supplementing deputy patrols during power outages.

The port of entry at Lukeville was closed for a time. Before the closure, two cars were seen getting through floodwater by driving onto a flatbed tow-truck for the crossing. Ajo Mountain Drive in the Organ Pipe monument was still closed at press time.

Grave marker adornments and other flotsam stuck to the perimeter fence around Walker Park as sheet flooding swept across the cemetery and down to the park. Gibson Arroyo did not overflow its banks, according to Pima County Regional Flood Control District. Neither was the flow blocked at First Avenue or Second Avenue; however, storm water flow from the west caused significant erosion. The district reported that Ashton Company continued working on Friday after the bulk of the storm had passed, and removed more sediment and debris from the arroyo. The Second Avenue culvert (bridge) and channel were cleaned out to 7-foot deep upstream and 6-foot downstream, where bedrock was encountered.

Numerous other reports filtered in. Outdoor bathrooms in parks collected mud, streets became test sites for 4-wheel-drive vehicles, trash can lids, outdoor furniture, and not a few shingles found themselves far removed from original locations. Palm fronds aplenty were piled around the Plaza, woodchips were swept from playgrounds, wayward tree branches made new lawn ornaments, and erosion spoiled many a manicured landscape at home and business. On the bright side, no one will have to water plants for a while.



Health center staff used buckets and basins to bail out flowerbeds.



More pictures can be viewed at www.facebook.com/AjoCopperNews