

Newspaper Article for 031914

National Flood Safety Awareness Week: March 16-22, 2014

Texas weather is one thing for certain ... certain to change! We have been experiencing cold weather - warm weather, drought threats – heavy rains, high humidity – low humidity. It's like a surprise each morning to watch the day's weather unfold!

Weather can be so interesting, yet so dangerous. Last year, 85 people lost their lives to freshwater flooding, according to NOAA. More than half of those fatalities were a result of people driving into floodwaters. On average, there are 89 fatalities and \$8.3 billion in dollars annually. Nearly every day of the year, someone somewhere in the US is threatened by a flood event.

When thinking about our county, you can probably think of an area that you are aware of that is subject to flooding – either short or long-term. Often, flash floods can occur within minutes and clear out about as quickly. Is anyone familiar with the intersection of Highway 21 and N Randolph, by Prosperity Bank? Have you ever tried to cross that intersection during a heavy rain? You may remember a photo in the Madisonville Meteor a couple of years or so ago of a vehicle partially under water there. On the other end of the spectrum, are you familiar with the Wilson Shoals area along the Trinity River or the west side of the county where the Navasota River runs? The steep river banks protect the citizens quite often from rising water in those areas – but not always. The river may rise quickly – or slowly – depending on the event. I'm sure some of you have pastures with low water crossings, or cattle in low-lying areas. Madison County can certainly boast of some of the best-educated “experts” on flooding, since they have monitored conditions for many years – protecting property or moving livestock when flood threatens.

However, even if we are aware of possible flooding, are any of you as guilty as I am about thinking, “That water isn't very deep. I can drive through it!” or “I just need to go quickly over that little bit of water and I'll be across it!”? We are not alone. The Centers for Disease Control report that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters. People often underestimate the force and power of water.

Many of these drownings are preventable, so let's do our part during this week, the National Flood Safety Awareness Week, and share with someone you love a quick reminder to TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN! Check out NOAA's website and click on TADD for loads of interesting statistics and great information on helping raise awareness and possibly prevent deaths related to flooding. As always, Be Safe Out There!
