



Staff photo by Russell Autrey

Ron Gould, aka "Santa Claus," makes a run into the Richmond Post Office Monday morning.

Rising Brazos River threatens Rosharon

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As the rains come down, the waters continue to go up along the Brazos River.

Danny Jan, assistant coordinator for the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management, said Monday morning projections for the river's crest have changed a little since last week.

The Brazos is now expected to crest in Richmond at 42.3 feet Tuesday evening, a day later and 2 feet lower than originally projected. As of 7 a.m. Monday, the river was measured at 39.76 feet at that location.

"That's not any worse than it was a few weeks ago," Jan said. "Our driving force is the rains we had a couple of weeks ago, not the rain we're having today."

However, just before press time Monday, Jan said forecasters are "beginning to see a little bit of an upswing" on their readings, and are keeping a weather eye on the Brazos and Colorado rivers.

Of most concern in this area, Jan said, is the Rosharon gauge along the Brazos, which is actually located about 8 miles west of Rosharon on FM 1462 on the Fort Bend/Brazoria county line. At that location, the river was measured at 41.7 feet Monday morning and is expected to crest at 47.7 feet early Wednesday. Flood stage in that area is 43 feet, with moderate flood stage at 46 feet.

The waters there "may have some impact in Brazoria County," Jan said, and may also affect Brazos Bend State Park in Fort Bend County. However, as of Monday morning, he said,

"they couldn't even see the river water" at the park.

"Brazos Bend may very well see some water in the park just like it did four or five weeks ago," he said, adding a few trails were closed at that time, but the water did not affect camping or day use facilities.

Jan said Fort Bend residents can expect to see the Brazos remain high for a prolonged period as water is periodically released from dams upstream.

"Of course, anything could change with Mother Nature, but this is what we're expecting as of this morning," Jan said. "We just want this water to get on out of here and the river to go down."

Precautions should be taken in low-lying areas along the Brazos, with livestock and

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equipment moved to higher ground until the river recedes.

On the Colorado River in Wharton, Andy Kirkland, coordinator for the Wharton County Emergency Management Office, said the height is holding at about 30 feet. Flood stage there is 39 feet.

"We're getting a lot of rain down here, but that

should not affect the river height," Kirkland said Monday morning, adding most of the rain was falling in the western portion of the county. "Now, if they get a lot of rain north of here tonight and tomorrow, that will be a different story."

The National Weather Service forecast for Fort Bend County calls for showers and thunderstorms to continue throughout the

day Monday, with a 40 percent chance of more precipitation Monday night. That chance increases to 70 percent Tuesday, and drops back to 40 percent again Tuesday night.

Independence Day celebrations will likely be drenched, with a 60 percent chance of rain predicted for Wednesday and again Thursday, dropping to 30 percent Friday, Saturday and Sunday.