

City cleaning up from recent flooding, relief in the distant future

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
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Public Works Director Robert Hamblen discusses two future projects that will fix city's drainage system

For most of the spring and summer, Gallup had been seeing major drought conditions. According to the Drought Monitor, McKinley County was in the D3 (extreme) drought zones, with a small part of the northwest corner of the state in the D2 (severe) zones for May, June, and most of July. But that all changed during the last weekend of July, and now Gallup is experiencing a lot of flooding.

On July 29, parts of the city received two inches of rain in less than an hour, and on July 30 about .60 inches was added on top of it. Weather.com is also showing more rain for the upcoming weekend and early next week.

The large amount of sudden rain has led to flooding all over town, and Public Works Director Robert Hamblen said in an email sent to the *Sun* on Aug. 2, that the city is currently working on fixing the issue.

According to Hamblen, the July 29 storm hit about 75% of the city. From the east side of town, the flooding started at Patton Drive and went all the way to Rico Street. He said it also covers the north and south sides of the city as well.

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Hamblen said there's not much the city could do to prevent the flooding, but that they're working on fixing the issue.

"When you get that much rain in less than an hour, there's not much you can do to prevent flooding," Hamblen said. "We are surrounded by hills and uneven terrain. This causes flooding in the low lying areas. City crews are still working on the cleanup in multiple areas throughout the city."

Cleanup includes removing trash, fallen trees, old appliances, furniture, and anything else that ends up in the city's drainage system. Hamblen said a lot of things end up in the system.

"It's pretty much a never ending job keeping up with the maintenance of our drainage systems," Hamblen said. "The city street department spends countless hours working on drainage maintenance throughout the entire city."

Hamblen said that the city has some upcoming drainage system improvement projects they're excited to get started on.

He said the West Logan Avenue reconstruction project will include drainage improvements, along with a West Aztec project as well.

Hamblen said the West Logan Avenue reconstruction project is estimated to be a \$1.2 million project. It will entail a complete street rebuilding, including curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and underground utilities. He said the city is expecting to take project out to bid in the spring, and it will take approximately six to eight months to complete once they find a company to sign on to it.

The West Aztec Avenue project will take the drainage west to Marguerite Street and north to the drainage channel. Hamblen said the city is currently in the process of securing easements across private property to carry the drainage structure.

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Hamblen estimated that the West Aztec Avenue project would cost about \$2 million, and will hopefully go out to bid next spring as well. He estimated that the project would take about four to six months.

With these upcoming projects, perhaps Gallup will see some relief from flooding in the near future.

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