



"Shredding Day" exceeds expectations

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Village helps residents apply for flood relief

ELMWOOD PARK – Village clean-up efforts following last week's flooding continue this week with unlimited garbage pickup, well-being checks on residents and a concerted effort by the village to help homeowners impacted by the heavy storms that hit Elmwood Park and many other communities across the region and the state.

"We're hoping to take advantage of the county and state disaster declarations," Village President Pete Silvestri said. "Hopefully, there will be a federal disaster declaration as well, meaning that assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would be available."

The Cook County Department of Homeland Security has asked the village to collect information regarding the initial assessment of damage to residents' homes and property as a result of flooding. Residents whose home or property were damaged are being asked to submit that information to the village before the end of the business day on Thursday, April 25th.

An electronic form is available on the village's website (elmwoodpark.org). Blank forms are also available at Village Hall (11 Conti Parkway). The village will compile all of the information and submit it to Cook County for consideration. Residents are also encouraged to take photos of flood damage and keep receipts from repairs in the event that assistance becomes available.

Meantime, Silvestri has been meeting with staff and doing a full assessment of the village's response to the flooding. "I'm pleased we were able to help as many homeowners as we did," Silvestri said. "But, there are always important lessons to learn from such a major event so that we continue to work to improve village assistance and services needed in response to these types of events."

Among the many items discussed, Silvestri has instructed staff to look into having the village buy a boat so that emergency responders can more easily reach flooded homes or maneuver through neighborhoods when streets are impassable. While the village has had access to a boat in the past, it has never owned its own.

Perhaps because of the flooding, residents gathered up 5.9 tons of bulky paper products for last weekend's "shredding day." Officials were amazed at the turnout from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Village Hall Saturday. At the same event, residents also took advantage of free disposal of old tires and electronics, as part of the village's ongoing "green agenda."

"This far exceeded our expectations," Silvestri said. "We know there were many homeowners were still busy with flood clean-up and unable to participate, so we're looking into holding another shredding day soon."

Based on data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, recycling 5.9 tons of paper saved approximately 100 mature trees, more than 41,300 gallons of water, nearly 20 cubic yards of landfill space and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 5.9 metric tons of carbon equivalent (MTCE).

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