Damage in town was mostly limited to flooded basements.

By Spencer Shelton

Linda Hall, Milton Freewater City Manager, describes companies, and key individuals who have worked "around the clock protecting Milton Freewater city limits against catastrophic damage from the levee" as heroes.

According to Hall, property located inside the city limits sustained little permanent damage. "Private homes have basement flooding."

Neighboring residents located on the north and south forks of the Walla Walla River, together with county property owners abutting the Walla Walla River and Couse Creek, experienced "complete devastation. My heart bleeds for that area."

The city manager, slated to meet with city officials evaluating secondary system damage, addressed concerns of city wells. "The city wells were not compromised" explaining sewer lift stations were carefully assessed.

Hall clarified that during the evacuation process, cloudy water was reported to city officials, caused by a destroyed fire hydrant. "When that happens, there is minor cloudiness in the (water) lines."

Hall was also scheduled to meet with county and state officials Monday to establish a one-stop resource center. "We are working with Umatilla County to develop a website to self-report damages linked to FEMA."

The website, located at Umatilla County Sheriff Emergency Management provides homeowners, renters and businesses an online survey reporting structural losses. Those without internet access may report damages by calling (541) 966-3671.

Business, economic and agricultural losses can be reported by downloading and completing a form submitted by email, fax (541) 278-5496 or by dropping off in person at Milton Freewater City Hall.

Public health flood information, water testing resources, utility contacts, assessment/taxation information and forms are accessible on the site together with Flood Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund information. Kari Isaacson, Executive Director of Blue Mountain Community Foundation, shared, "The fund was created in response to the disaster we have all experienced."

Individuals, moved to make charitable donations to help their communities, find local government does not accept donations. "This is a way for people to help and who appreciate a charitable donation."

The foundation is waiving fees and encourages donors to earmark where monies are to be spent. Undesignated funds will be distributed by a committee.

Blue Mountain Community Foundation
P.O. Box 603
22 E. Poplar St., Suite 206
Walla Walla, WA 99362
509.529.4371
bmcf@bluemountainfoundation.org