

NEWS

Many in Kermit clean up and count their blessings

By Chris Lawrence

February 17, 2025 - 6:33 pm



Lea Ruble explains the height of the Tug Fork river in her yard from the weekend in Kermit, W.Va. PHOTO: Chris Lawrence

KERMIT, W.Va. — Across the low lying areas of Kermit, W.Va. in Mingo County water continued to flood streets in low lying areas Monday, a day after the water of the Tug Fork River crested. The river reached a record high level in the town downstream from Williamson.

Lea Ruble pulled out a pressure washer and prepared to start hosing out her basement. The local water plant had survived and on generator power was able to still provide water service to homes in the community. Ruble was concerned her furnace was lost.



Several homes in Kermit had flooded basements, but most in the low part of town sit on elevated foundations which saved the living quarters. PHOTO: Chris Lawrence

"I had them move it down here because I wanted more closet space upstairs. Now I have a \$10,000 closet," she laughed.

However, like many of her neighbors Ruble's house was elevated. Although flood water got into the basement and was standing 21 inches deep it did not reach the living quarters.

"In '77 this house had three feet of water in it. In '95, the Corps of Engineers raised it 10 feet and moved it over 10 feet," Ruble explained.

The requirement to raise the house paid off. Although her basement was filled with mud and her yard was a mess, her damages were minimal to her home with the exception of the furnace. Ruble said her generator kept the lights on and gas logs kept the house warm as she and her family centered their focus on her 87 year old mother who suffers from dementia.

"My main concern was that the generator would keep going. We focused on keeping her safe and not having to get her out," she said.

Down the street Shane Brumfeld and his wife also counted their blessings. As a generator whirled in the background, elevated five feet off the ground, the couple realized their good fortune.

"More or less we have a big mess, but I know there's a lot of people who were not as lucky as we were," he explained.



Even after the river crested, clogged drains continued to cause problems. PHOTO: Chris Lawrence

Brumfeld had enough warning and enough experience to know to move as much as he could out of harm's way before the water rose. His camper and other vehicles were relocated to higher ground. His garage and basement areas had all of the important items moved upstairs. Although there was water in his basement and garage, Brumfeld said nothing of any great value was lost.

"We've got power and we've been able to cook. We just picked up a bunch of pizzas and delivered them to our other neighbors. We had extras and a lot of them haven't had anything to eat because you can't get anywhere to eat," he explained.

Damage assessment and cleanup in Kermit will continue as the waters continue to recede in the days ahead.