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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Corps announces full breach on levee L-575 near Hamburg, Iowa

Omaha, Neb. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that a full breach has occurred on the Missouri River Federal levee L-575 near Hamburg, Iowa this morning.

Early assessments have determined that this fourth breach is just south of the previous three partial breaches, according to Omaha District Chief of Emergency Management Kim Thomas. The full breach is 50 feet wide and occurred in approximately five minutes.

The breach is located near River Mile 552 in Atchison County, Mo. The levee is in the Federal Program (PL84-99) and is operated and maintained by the non-federal sponsor. It was constructed by the Corps in the late 1940s.

The local levee sponsor has removed all of his personnel and equipment out of the area.

“People’s safety is our number one concern, so we want to stress how important it is for the public to stay off of these levees as we continue to assess the risk,” said Omaha District Commander Col. Bob Ruch.

All State Emergency Management agencies have been notified, as well as the local emergency managers. The Corps is working closely with Iowa and Missouri Emergency Management Agencies, as well as the County Emergency Managers, the National Weather Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region VII to ensure the safety of all in these areas.

Levees can be breached for a variety of reasons and, at this point, it is too early to determine what the cause of this full breach is, said Thomas.

The levee breach follows weeks of high flows and increasing releases from the main stem dams in Montana and the Dakotas. The Corps continues to aggressively monitor and evaluate the inundation areas.

During times of expected high water and flooding, the Corps encourages levee sponsors to carefully monitor their levees and notify the Corps immediately of any concerns.

“We have contractors in place and are working expeditiously to raise Ditch 6 levee near Hamburg by an additional four feet to provide a temporary flood risk reduction measure for the community of Hamburg,” said Thomas.

For Ditch 6, the fill on section one is 99 percent complete; section two is 90 percent complete and section three is 75 percent complete. The entire project will be finished on June 17. USACE is currently working the evaluation of the inundation timeframe. We are also coordinating with the Iowa and Missouri Departments of Transportation, and will add low-spot fill on the right bank of the Nishnabotna River levee.

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