



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort making progress clearing clogged storm drains

Daily work by Beaufort city crews and outside experts is clearing clogged storm drains of roots, compacted sand and debris and other blockages that contributed to several streets flooding during recent heavy rainstorms.

The work by Eadies Construction cost more than \$28,000 from Aug. 12-20. Their teams used specialized equipment and techniques to dig out tree roots, flush out debris and otherwise open up parts of the often-clogged stormwater drainage system in Beaufort, said Isiah Smalls, director of public works and facilities management.

Both the streets and the stormwater system belong to the S.C. Department of Transportation, but city crews are doing what they can to fix the immediate problem of surface flooding that threatens structures in Beaufort, Smalls said.

“We’ve had our Public Works crew out every day, along with the team from Eadies Construction, and we are making progress,” Smalls said. “At this point we are addressing the immediate and known threats to structures and then we’ll address flooding into yards.

“For a longer-term solution we’ll need to work with the state DOT because the stormwater system runs underneath their roads. We are talking about thousands of catch basins and miles of pipes that may not have been maintained since the SCDOT installed them,” he said.

In addition, the city will be working with Beaufort County and the SCDOT to address drainage issues in Mossy Oaks and The Point neighborhoods.

From mid-July through mid-August, several locally-heavy storms dropped inches of rain in very short periods across Beaufort. When those deluges coincided with high tides, it worsened the

area's already poor drainage. Several streets were flooded with more than a foot of water for short periods.

"We have always had problems with flooding when we get these extra-heavy rainfalls," Smalls said. "We are working with our crew and the contractors to clear the drains and to remove blockages from the stormwater pipes."

City officials encouraged residents to check drain grates in their neighborhoods and either sweep away accumulated debris or alert the city's Public Works Department at 525-7054.

Further, residents and landscapers are reminded not to dump yard debris into roads where it can be washed into the drainage system. Spanish moss, leaves and grass clippings serve as clogs that bind to sand and dirt particles, creating drain and pipe blockages that have severely affected the stormwater drainage system in Beaufort, Smalls said.

There is no limit on the number of bags of normal yard debris that can be placed curbside by Beaufort residents. However, they must be sure that no bag weighs more than 50 pounds and that any bundled items, such as branches, don't exceed four feet in length or 50 pounds.

Leaves and branch pickups are made once weekly in the city. If you don't know your designated day for service, please call City of Beaufort Public Works at (843) 525-7054 extension #1, Waste Pro at (843) 645-4100 or visit www.cityofbeaufort.org and click on Residents / City Services / Solid Waste to see the schedule.

"Having our streets and yards flood once in awhile from big rain storms isn't anything new to Beaufort or the Lowcountry," Small said. "As we have built up, we haven't built up a better stormwater management system. That's why even the little things, like people noticing a storm grate clogged with moss and pinestraw while they are out walking their dog, can help us."

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