Tens years later, flood of ’09 remembered as a victory paid for with sweat, tears

By Dave Olson
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FARGO

When the flood of 2009 hit, Pete and Debra Livdahl’s rural Moorhead business, Building and Grounds Management, was in the thick of the battle to preserve area homes. In the process, the Livhdahls paid a price.

“My husband saved a lot of places and we flooded. We’ve been struggling ever since,” Debra Livdahl said, recalling the damage their business suffered a decade ago when water entered their shop buildings that housed equipment.

When the flood was over, the Livdahls were able to replace their equipment with the help of FEMA loan money. However, they only recently made their final payment on the loan and, before they did, every check they wrote was a reminder of what they went through in 2009.

“We’ve had a struggle, I tell ya,” Debra Livdahl said. “The Livdahls weren’t the only ones to suffer water damage when the Red River flooded in 2009, but when it comes to the big picture, the area was spared widespread disaster, thanks largely to an army of volunteers that worked day and night to deliver and place millions of sandbags.

About three or four million of those sandbags went to Oakport Township north of Moorhead.

Greg Anderson was chairman of the township board in 2009 when flood waters took a number of homes in Oakport and came close to claiming many more, including Anderson’s.

‘Nothing left in us’

For Anderson, the inside of the flood really hit home the night he called his wife, Julie, and told her: “You have to evacuate the house, I think we’re going to lose it.

The family packed most important belongings in suitcases and headed to their lake home, thinking it was the last time they would see their Oakport house intact.

But after a night of sleep, they decided to keep fighting and, ultimately, the family saved their house.

“There was that point where we said, ‘We don’t have anything left in us,’” Anderson said, recalling the despair they fell at the height of the flood.

But he said

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Volunteers fill sandbags at the FargoDome in 2009 after official warnings flood levels would climb higher than initially forecast.

By Barry Amundson
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FARGO

With steel and concrete work accelerating, the $517 million 379-stall parking garage, once a dream building in downtown Fargo is well out of the ground and on schedule.

In the coming months, expect another story to be added to the main tower of the building every two to three weeks.

By September, all 18 stories or 235 feet of the mixed-use building’s main tower, which is currently 16 percent completed, will have shot up into the skyline and will be enclosed.

‘We’re at one of the pivotal points where we are getting above the ground level,’ said General Manager Pete Vettel.

Also by late summer or early this fall, the 379-stall parking garage, which is currently 65 percent complete and being priced together like a Lego set with precast concrete, will be open for business and available to the public for downtown parking.

Once the glass-covered main tower is up, and its tan and gray exterior trims, workers can complete steel work that wraps around the Broad- way and Third Avenue sides of the building. That portion will house the R.D. Offutt and Co. corporate head- quarters and other office space as well as two or three small business offices.

‘We’re at one of the pivotal points where we are getting above the ground level,’ said General Manager Derek Hoeschen of McGough Con- struction Co. in an interview

By Kim Hyatt
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FORUM — The Fargo Park District is accepting bids for 16.7 acres in Anderson Park, located at 45th St. N., that the parcel for sale consists of four baseball fields and a gravel parking lot.

To the east, there are eight adult and youth base- ball fields closer to 42nd Street South that will not be affected by the potential sale.

The property for sale is zoned as general commer- cial, so potential future use would be similar to what exists along the corridor. Businesses near the property include a Sonic Drive-in, Pizza Ranch and Famous Dave’s BBQ.

Fargo Park District to sell land along busy 45th Street

By Barry Amundson
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FARGO

Fargo Mayor Dennis Waker, far right, meets with members of the local and national media during a press conference at Fargo City Hall during the 2009 flood.

An artist rendering shows what the parking garage will look like as well as a view of the north side of the Block 9 building.

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Fargo Park District to sell land along busy 45th Street

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30° 14°

Partly cloudy; Flurries Details, D1

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OUR HIGH-WATER MARK
Volunteers work to raise the level of a dike at Eighth Avenue North and Oak Street near Missenschaft Field in Fargo during the 2009 flood.

getting a restful night of sleep was also going to come in a different way than we thought: “We’re not giving up.”

Setting the table

The Fargo-Moorhead area was flooded in 2009, in a sense, in the fall of 2008. The autumn rains saw soils saturated and ditches and culverts choked with ice, when the snow started falling.

Moorhead snow fell in December 2008 and by late February 2009 in Fargo, but预测 were 60 inches in Fargo and 12 inches in Grand Forks, F5 Project leader John Pelletier said in Fargo, F5 projects are normally the result of Fargo-based non-profit helping recovering communities. A large-scale event focused on integrating communities into the recovery.

Founder Adam Martin, a Fargo-based non-profit helping recovering communities, explained that the home that surrounded the Fargo-Moorhead area had paid off, however, as more of the metro area was spared serious damage. All properties escaped.

Uniting communities

Adam Martin, founder of the F5 Project, shares his story at the 2016 United Way of Cass-Clay kickoff event at the Holiday Inn in Fargo. Martin said he was inspired to find a way to “empower the women” who live there.

The women’s home in Grand Forks, the former professional home of Fargo’s late Mayor Walaker, who died in January 2014, had joked during the flood of 2009, “It’s a funny thing to be in a different house in a different city,” Martin said more donors have been attracted to the organization that stands to benefit from the its success.

There isn’t just an official count, but Martin noted that F5 Project residents in the last two years have told him that he was ready to back to jail. F5 project has improved and residents in two years. Some foundations won’t look back newer nonprofits that don’t have a history, but he said it was initially difficult to find charitable support from major foundations.

Martin said the organization “– (We’re) figuring out who we are and where we’re going in the future,” Martin said.

Fargo nonprofit helping felons live successfully in community expands in Fargo, Grand Forks

By Alex Drenier and Alyssa Kelly

Fargo’s F5 Project, a nonprofit that pairs departing inmates in Oakport were flooded, including the people of Fargo were ahead of the curve of the flood fight, Walaker reacted strongly to news that the weather service was predicting a crest of just over 42 feet, a prediction that didn’t come true, but nonetheless left many feeling deflated.

“Your mind doesn’t want to deal with it,” Walaker said at the time. “Your mind wants to tell you it’s impossible. But you don’t have a choice.”

Note: The historic flood of 2009 was chronicled in a Fargo Forum called “With Over Water” that is available for purchase at iforum.com/2009/flood.

Donations can reach Forum reporter Dave Olson at 701 241-5555.

For the Love of Gardens

Satur's 23rd March 23, 1.jpg

Live game shows!

SAT, MAR 30 | 8 PM | $25 | MAHNOMEN

Welcome to the Forum

This photo was taken during the 2009 flood and shows the Red River home of Roger and Barbara Sipson in south Moorhead. The Sipsons and a number of their neighbors on Rivershore Drive were successful in warding off disaster, they’d be yellow every one.

The promise was later fulfilled, in a symbolic way, when Walaker handed out 9,999 “Dundie” dollars, coupons that, through the generosity of Miller Lite, could be redeemed at a midnight in Fargo for 51 of beers. At one point at the height of the flood fight, Walaker reacted strongly to news that the weather service was predicting a crest of just over 42 feet, a prediction that didn’t come true, but nonetheless left many feeling deflated.

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