

From: Milton Hamel

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To: Concerned Citizens of Caddo Parish District Four

Earlier this year when the Red River was at flood stage, Matthew Linn was in Dixie Garden checking on the drainage.

From there Matthew called me, because he knew that I had lived and worked my entire life in this area along the river and knew some of its history. He wanted to know if he could come over and discuss any low areas where the Red River might breach into the neighborhoods.

I drove Matthew under the Jimmie Davis bridge where the water from the Red River was 12 inches in height from moving around the barrier wall. Then I took Matthew to the high point of the tree line along the west side of the Clyde Fant Parkway where any flood water from under the bridge would likely flow into the lake at Island Park subdivision.

Almost immediately Matthew Linn had Caddo Parish and DOTD dumping and compacting dirt on each end of the barrier wall in order to protect against the river with up to a thirty-four foot elevation.

It seemed that almost every day after this, the predicted crest elevation of the Red River was raised until it eventually exceeded thirty-seven feet. At this point I believed that if something significant did not happen, River Park Church would likely flood. About this time I received a call from a friend that lived in Island Park subdivision who said that all the people in that subdivision had just received notice that it was possible they could have an emergency evacuation of their homes.

While this was going on Matthew Linn got a commitment from the National Guard to assemble five foot tall Hesco baskets and fill them with sand. While waiting for baskets to be delivered from Minden he got 1000 Hesco baskets from Caddo Parish so the National Guard could get started. They worked all night and finished the dam at 8AM the next morning. Any potential flooding was stopped cold.

During the week before the Red River crested, Matthew Linn came to the river a half dozen times a day. He came to check on conditions, to see what else needed to be done, to make sure everyone had accomplished what they had committed to do and to meet with various officials. I never saw an elected official show as much concern, nor spend as much time and effort looking after his constituents. I asked him how he did it and he said he had taken a leave of absent from his job for a week.

Then weeks after the crises was over Matthew Linn came back to see what temporary fixes needed to be made permanent. Wow! Impressive!

Although none of my property was at risk it is not very often you get to see a person take on a crises in real time that is of critical importance to many of your friends and neighbors. For those who did not observe it I think we owe Matthew Linn a big debt of gratitude.



Milton Hamel