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THE FLOODS OF 2008

C.R.'s surprise FEMA money

Agency acted on its own to start cash flowing for public fixes

By Adam Belz
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The surprise \$77 million awarded to the city Tuesday for public flood recovery came because federal officials believed the city was too slow in asking for money.

"We just got concerned that the city was moving a little slower than what we wanted," said Eric Wynn, the Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance coordinator in Cedar Rapids. "The city can come back and ask for an adjustment. Nothing is set in stone with these project worksheets."

FEMA submitted worksheet estimates and applications for funding based on rough estimates and without the city's knowledge.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jim Prosser said he appreciates FEMA's desire to move money quickly but noted that this week's award will make no difference in the long run.

The \$77 million is nothing more than a preliminary number, and the city must continue to work on its more thorough project worksheets.

"We can't get the money from the state or from FEMA until we have the level of detail that we're getting right now," Prosser said.

FEMA has been under pressure to perform swiftly and effectively ever since its politically disastrous response to Hurricane Katrina.

The agency designated the \$77 million this week for cleanup and repairs to public

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REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

'FIGHT WITH ME'



Republican presidential candidate John McCain acknowledges the crowd as he goes on stage at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., last night.

McCain accepts GOP nomination, vowing to bring change

By David Espo and Robert Furlow
Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — John McCain, a POW turned political rebel, vowed Thursday night to vanquish the "constant partisan rancor" that grips Washington as he launched his fall campaign for the White House. "Change is coming," he promised the roaring Republican National Convention and a prime-time television audience.

"Fight with me. Fight with me. Fight for what's right for our country," he urged in a convention crescendo.

To repeated cheers from his delegates, McCain made only passing reference to an unpopular George W. Bush and criticized fellow Republicans as well as Democratic rival Barack Obama in reaching out to independents and swing voters who will pick the next president.

"We were elected to change Washington, and we let Washington change us," he said of the Republicans who controlled Congress for a dozen years before they were voted out of office in 2006.

As for Obama, he said, "I will keep taxes low and cut them where I can. My opponent will raise them. I will cut government spending. He will increase it."

McCain's wife, Cindy, and ticketmate Sarah Palin and her husband joined him on stage as tens of thousands red, white and blue balloons cascaded from high above the convention floor.

Unlike Obama's speech a week ago, McCain offered no soaring oratory until his speech-ending summons to fight for the country's future.

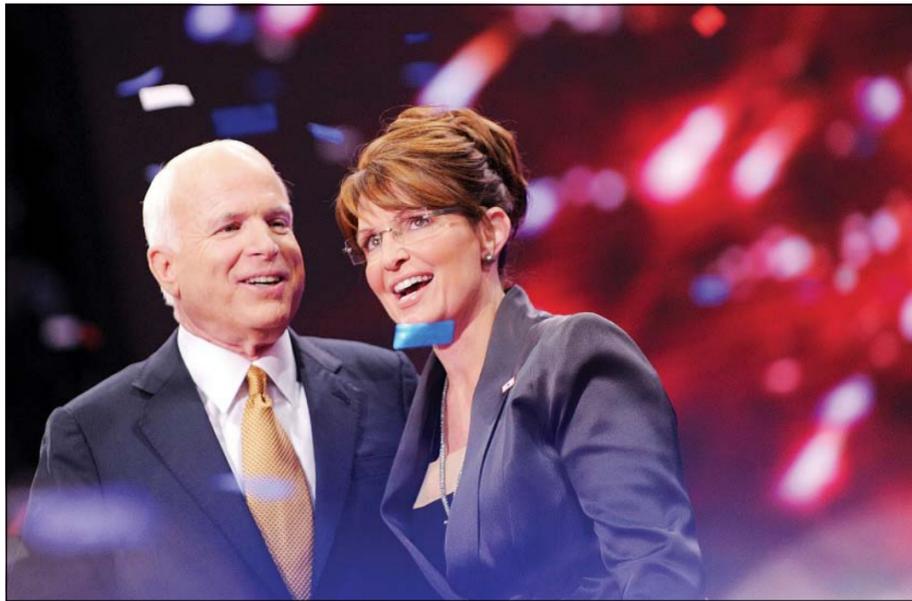
But his own measured style left the hall in cheers, and as is his habit in campaign stops around the country, he stepped off the stage to plunge into the crowd after his speech. Palin

► **MCCAIN, PAGE 6A**

Inside

■ Marion man portrays Abraham Lincoln, nation's first Republican president, at convention, **2A**

Republican presidential candidate John McCain and vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin enjoy the celebration after McCain's address at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., last night.



Abaca Press

GEDAR RAPIDS GOVERNMENT

Mayor, accused of napping, says she'll have checkup

By Rick Smith
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Mayor Kay Halloran will undergo a physical examination next week in response to people saying she nods off at times during Wednesday evening council meetings.

"Since it's been brought up, I've scheduled a physical just in case," Halloran said.

"I don't think so, but I don't know," she said to a question about nodding off. "To the best of my knowledge, I don't."

This week isn't the first time that some have wondered if the mayor, who turns 72 in January, has momentarily napped at council meetings. However, Wednesday evening, KGAN (Channel 2) trained a camera on the mayor during

the meeting, catching what appears to be her dozing off.

The mayor has not had any vacation in the 12 weeks since the June flood but said she plans to visit her son in North Dakota this month.

"I probably need some recharging. I would cheerfully admit that," Halloran said.

The recovery from the flood has made for longer work days

and both earlier meetings and later ones.

In recent weeks, the council has been convening at 7 a.m. a couple of days a week, and its Wednesday evening meetings can stretch to three and four hours, from 5:30 to past 9 p.m.

"It's been busy. We've had some big things to worry about," Halloran said.

Asked about her health, the

mayor said, "I think it's fine. I am more than 50 years old, so I don't expect the same things from my body as I did when I was 40."

Halloran is a retired attorney and former Democratic state lawmaker who defeated well-known Realtor Scott Olson in a competitive race in 2005 to become the city's first mayor in its new part-time

council/city manager government. She's in the third year of a four-year term.

During the 2005 campaign, Halloran noted that in 1999 she had suffered a transient

► **MAYOR, PAGE 6A**



Kay Halloran
C.R. mayor

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TODAY'S WEATHER



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