RAIN, RAIN . . . GO AWAY!

It was “Sink or Swim” for a Midwest Business That Was Buried Under 6 Feet of Water During the Flood of ’93

The flood of 1993 is not likely to be soon forgotten by those in the Midwest who lived through the experience. Dan Kratz, executive vice president of Roco Equipment Co., Kansas City, Kan., wrote Construction Dimensions to tell us how he and his company have endured and survived some of the worst rainfall the Midwest has seen in decades.
Friday, July 9, 1993, began like so many other days this past summer: A steady rain began in the early morning and continued all day. Falling on already-saturated soil, the rain began running off into surrounding streams throughout the Kansas City area.

The number of days without rain since June began could be counted on one hand, so the new storms had caused some minor flooding in certain areas.

As Friday passed into Saturday, just after midnight the strength of the rain intensified and grew violent. By 6 a.m. Saturday an additional 10 inches had fallen and the streams had lost their battle to restrain the water.

Unaware of the severity of the rain, I was preparing to leave home for the office when I received a call from our service manager, John Keefer. “Don’t even think about coming in. The West Bottoms area is swamped with 3 to 6 feet of water and entry to our shop is impossible,” he stated excitedly.

In his usual manner, John had understated the situation and the heroics he had displayed. I found out later that John had almost gotten to our location when he was forced to abandon his automobile due to the rapidly rising water. He was able to swim to the highest ground on our lot, start a large boom truck and drive out of the flooded area. In doing so, he rescued three people clinging to the tops of their automobiles and was credited with saving the life of another person who was adrift and losing the strength to keep his head above water.

Contrary to John’s recommendation, I left for work and listened to the radio coverage of what had happened overnight. A stream named Turkey Creek that runs parallel to Interstate 35 on the western side of town had not been able to contain the huge amount of overnight rainfall. As areas began to flood, the pumping station that could have diverted much of the runoff was inadvertently shut down as the electric utility shut off service to these areas. Highways were closed, businesses were flooded, motorists were stranded and two people were killed. The devastation was enormous as I surveyed the streets that still contained 3 to 4 feet of water. The roof tops of automobiles Debris tossed around by the force of the water now came to rest in the most unlikely places.

---

Construction Dimensions/October 1993 25

---

Flood — Cont’d on page 30
Flood — Cont’d from page 25

peaked through the water, and the debris tossed around by the force of the water now came to rest in the most unlikely places.

to go into our shop and began immediately to clean up the damage. Many items were impossible to salvage, such as office doors that began to curl and electric motors that were ruined.

The job of rebuilding begins with renewed optimism that opportunities will be mated by the massive demand for new home construction and repair.

I was able to get close enough to our offices to realize that we had received major water damage to our shop and parts department, with no damage at all to our administrative offices.

On Monday, July 12, we were able By Aug. 1, we were back in business and nearly back on schedule. It will definitely be a summer to remember and one that reinforces the ability of us all to overcome obstacles put before us that at times seem insurmountable. The job of rebuilding begins with renewed optimism that opportunities will be created by the massive demand for new home construction and repair. While we need to remember the events of the past few months...it is now time to move forward. ©