

Flood-ravaged states get some dry weather

by UPI

ST. LOUIS - The Meramec River rose toward record crests in several locations as Missouri and other states hit by deadly flooding began drying out. Officials blamed flooding for more than a dozen deaths in several states, including five in Missouri and two in Illinois. Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt activated the National Guard and President George Bush declared the state a disaster. Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich declared 19 southern counties disaster areas. Dry weather was forecast, but some rivers weren't expected to crest until the weekend, AccuWeather.com reported. As the Meramec overflowed its banks, the National Weather Service forecast record or near-record crests, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. At Valley Park, Mo., the crest of 40 feet was expected by Saturday -- 24 feet over the town's flood stage. The Mississippi and Missouri rivers also rose toward flood crests, but weren't expected to be as troublesome as the Meramec, the newspaper said. In eastern Oklahoma, officials reported the system dumped between 2 1/2 inches and 9 inches of rain, flooding homes, washing out at least three bridges and damaging roads, the Tulsa (Okla.) World reported.

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