

Johnston will request flood aid

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Johnston, famous for its disastrous floods, will seek about \$100 million in federal and state aid to recover from the last killer deluge.

Mayor Herbert Pfuhl said Wednesday special state and federal legislation will be required for the city to receive financial aid to rebuild from flooding on July 20.

"The trick is to get a funding commitment we can rely on and plan on. If we're going to have a lasting community with employment and livability, then we have to have this extraordinary funding," Pfuhl told a meeting of public and private officials.

Officially, 77 persons lost their lives when torrential rains forced the

Conemaugh River to overflow its banks in the valleys of southwestern Pennsylvania around Johnston. At least 10 persons are still reported missing.

But the city's loss was not confined to deaths and property damages. Since the flood, Bethlehem Steel Corp., the nation's second largest steel producer, laid off 3,800 of its Johnston workers. The layoffs were blamed on flood damages and sagging domestic steel sales.

The city's unemployment rate rose to

17 per cent in August, up 6.1 per cent from July when 6,700 persons were unemployed. About 19,000 were jobless in August.

The U.S. Department of Labor said this week that Johnston had the highest August unemployment rate of the nation's 198 largest metropolitan areas.

Johnston has already committed spending \$7.5 million of its federal community development funds on flood recovery.

Pa. students called ill-equipped

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Many Pennsylvania school children are not equipped to perform society's basic skills or enjoy its finer pleasures, state Education Secretary Caryl Kline says.

"Many children are graduating without basic skills and good analytical thinking to weigh the pros and cons and make a decision," Mrs. Kline told the 81st Pennsylvania School Boards Association meeting.

The former head of the University of Pittsburgh's continuing education program for women addressed 1,600 delegates at the opening of the convention being held in Pittsburgh this week.

She said she regrets tight finances have forced reductions in language and arts programs in many of the state's 505 school districts.

"When there's a fiscal problem, the first things we get rid of are art,

music and gym. Then we turn out people who are not equipped to enjoy a full, satisfying, long life."

But she advised school board members to take a close look at their district's finances and implement cost cutting measures such as closing and merging school buildings.

Mrs. Kline said money would be saved and duplication avoided if the gap between basic education and higher education was bridged.

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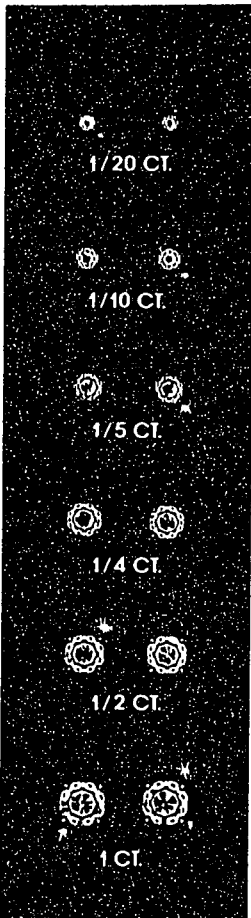
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