A 500-YEAR FLOOD
ONE YEAR LATER, CARENCRO STILL RECOVERING

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On March 12, 2012, it rained and rained in Carencro until the water had no place to go but into homes and businesses.

According to the National Weather Service in Lake Charles, 15 to 20 inches of rain fell in Carencro and the northern part of Lafayette Parish in only a few hours.

The flood damaged about 450 homes in Carencro, which housed about 2,000 residents. With nearly 25 percent of the city's homes damaged, the small city has spent the better part of the post-flood year getting things back to normal.

"(The) majority of the homeowners completed their own repairs due to the minimal amount of damage and lack of flood insurance," said Carencro City Manager Jay Castille.

"In areas adjacent to coulees, these homes had up to 2 feet of water in them for several hours. These are the homeowners that received the majority loss of property and some are still trying to recover."

A number of the city's sewer lift stations and their electrical panels were submerged during the flood, Castille said. Each one is fixed as money becomes available, but it will be a long process.

Castille estimated that 60 percent of the city was under water at one point, and city engineers have called the rainfall a 500-year flooding event. Dozens of people were rescued from homes, an elementary school and a day care.

As the floodwaters receded and officials better learned of the damages, Lafayette City-Parish President Joey Durel and Gov. Bobby Jindal declared states of emergency for the parish.

The road to recovery has been a frustrating one for locals and officials alike, though, since FEMA denied Jindal's request for a major disaster declaration for Louisiana and the five parishes -- Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, Acadia and Jefferson -- affected by the flooding.

Castille says he still gets calls about the flood.

"I receive approximately 10 calls a month on general flood questions," Castille said.