

# Miles by Miles City of Grand Forks 1997-2007

**April 19, 1997** – ‘Flood of the Century’ hits Grand Forks, North Dakota and East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Floodwaters invade nearly all land mass of both cities and force 60,000 residents to evacuate – leaving behind their homes, businesses and communities.

**April 1997** – Public health department establishes temporary sanitation citywide with more than 1,000 port-a-potties (the last of which was removed in December 1997). Portable shower facilities were set up at key city locations in early May.

**April 1997** – The city-county health department and the city’s building inspection and fire departments conduct health and safety inspections throughout Grand Forks to help businesses reopen and homeowners determine whether to repair or rebuild. Inspections were completed by October 1997.

**May 1997** – Essential water and sewer services are re-established within the first two weeks due to efforts by a team of local, state and federal agencies.

**May 1997** – City’s lone hospital reopens (May 8); medical clinic reopens (May 12).

**Summer 1997** – Grand Forks Park District establishes daycare and recreation activities for city’s children and youth.

**Summer 1997** – The city forms a partnership with non-profit Grand Forks Home, Inc., Fannie Mae and local financial institutions to help meet the urgent need for housing.

**August 1997** – Grand Forks County offices, district court and correctional center operations return to Grand Forks after temporarily operating from a small community 30 miles away.

**August 1997** – City’s public schools resume classes using rented facilities that include two churches, 100 relocatable buildings, the National Guard Armory and portions of two high schools.

**1997-98** – About 850 properties are purchased by the city through a voluntary buyout program designed to remove structures from high-risk flood areas. The \$40-million buyout was funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the State of North Dakota and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

**1998** – Approximately \$42 million in local, state and federal funds is spent to repair or replace damaged city sewer and water lines, streets and other infrastructure.

**1998** – Construction begins on more than 250 homes in three new major subdivisions to replace lost or damaged housing stock.

**March 1998** – The Empire Arts Center opens. Located in the heart of downtown, the Empire was in the midst of renovation from an old movie theater to a performing arts center when floodwaters and burning embers from the fire caused about \$200,000 damage. The Empire’s \$2.4 million renovation helped spur other downtown building projects.



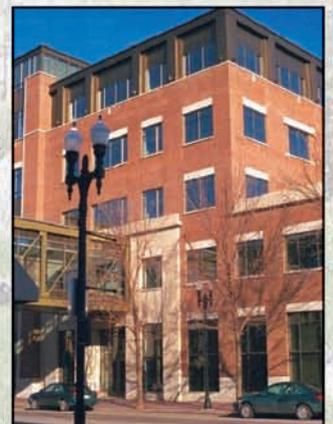
**August 1998** – The *Grand Forks Herald* newspaper opens a new \$4.3 million building on the site of its former office devastated by both flood and fire. The new building, distinguished by a massive clock tower, soaring atrium, and spacious community room, features many architectural details that symbolize the 1997 flood and that better protect it from future floods.

**1998** – Valley Memorial Homes opens a new \$20-million campus in southwest Grand Forks to offer older adults a variety of programs, services and housing options through their retirement years.



**January 1999** – A new elementary school, named Phoenix to mark the city’s rebirth, is built to replace two longtime elementary schools – Belmont and Lincoln. Architectural components of the old schools were incorporated into the new building, elevated above 100-year flood levels. On the city’s south side, a new middle school was built to replace the former South Middle School also heavily damaged by the flood.

**October 1999** – A \$16-million commercial office complex built by the city opens in the heart of downtown. Known as the Corporate Center, this two-building complex constructed with flood-protection features anchors downtown redevelopment and replaces virtually all the commercial office space lost in the fire. Combined, the buildings provide about 100,000 square feet of office space.





**January 2000** – A new \$20-million county office building opens. The building, constructed with numerous flood-protection elements, improves citizen access to government agencies by co-locating them under one roof.

**June 2000** – Town Square, an outdoor gathering place in downtown Grand Forks, opens for public use. The square features farmer's market-style booths, an entertainment stage, playground equipment, and a paddlewheel sculpture that signifies the region's riverboat history.



Photo By: Juddel Bulls



**June 2000** – Officials break ground for development of a 2,200-acre greenway along the Red River of the North and the Red Lake River. The greenway

is designed to provide numerous recreational opportunities and room for the rivers to expand in future floods without endangering lives or property.

**June 2000** – Officials break ground for a \$409-million flood protection project for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. The project, designed to protect both cities from a similar flood event, is a series of floodwalls, earthen levees, flood pumping stations, storm sewers, diversion ditches and recreational areas.

**September 2000** – A new \$4.5-million bookstore anchors University Village, a large development conceived by former University of North Dakota (UND) President Ken Baker as part of the university's flood recovery. Funding for University Village includes a \$1.6 million infrastructure grant from the city.

**February 2001** – The Alerus Center, an \$80-million events facility, opens. The city-owned facility features a 99,600-square-foot arena for concerts, community events and UND football games, as well as a premier convention center. The facility also has been utilized as an emergency shelter during weather-related events.

**October 2001** – The Ralph Engelstad Arena, a state-of-the-art sports venue, opens on the UND campus. The Engelstad, which features a 12,000-seat ice arena, is home to the university's Fighting Sioux hockey team and was made possible by a \$100-million gift from philanthropist Ralph Engelstad, a former UND hockey player himself.



**2002** – King's Walk Golf Course, a \$6.8 million Arnold Palmer Signature championship course, opens to the public. The 18-hole course, spanning 210 acres, is the only PGA-rated course in North Dakota.

**2002** – Grand Forks is recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies for work in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The foundation for the GIS was laid with \$1.2 million in flood-recovery funds. From that investment, the city has been able to build an important mapping tool that can be used both by government agencies and the public.

**June 2004** – Lincoln Drive Park is completed and dedicated. The park occupies the site where Lincoln Elementary School stood prior to the flood, as well as the open space resulting from the voluntary buyout by the city of 350 homes in high-risk flood areas.



Photo By: Roxanne Melberg

**Fall 2005** – South-end pedestrian bridge spanning the Red River of the North and joining Grand Forks and East Grand Forks is complete.

**April 2006** – Grand Forks sees its fifth highest flood of record and the first test of its nearly completed \$409-million flood-protection project. For the first time at a river level that high, no sandbagging is needed and the city sustained no damage.

**August 2006** – Recreational bike path alongside the flood-protection project is complete. The path, which runs the entire length of the project, is the second longest bike path in North Dakota.

**Fall 2006** – North-end pedestrian bridge spanning the Red River and joining Grand Forks and East Grand Forks is complete.

**Fall 2006** – Officials break ground for a \$50-million hotel and entertainment complex being built next to the Alerus by a Canadian developer.

**January 2007** – The flood protection project is functionally complete. The floodwall, which incorporates technology used in Europe for years, is the first of its kind in the United States. Most notably, the wall has concrete footings with concrete stems and 20-ft. aluminum stop logs installed between the concrete stems.

**April 2007** – On the eve of the 10-year flood anniversary, a wireless network will come online to support the city's public safety mobile data system and automate water facilities. The mobile data portion of the system can provide police officers with real-time information directly from their patrol vehicles. For the water utility, the network can be used to automate the city's water storage and pump facilities from serial to IP communications.

**April 2007** – Local, state and federal officials dedicate the city's flood protection project.

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