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TV stations put priority on flood story

By Roy Ortega / El Paso Times

El Paso TV stations stayed on the air continuously Tuesday, providing viewers with live images of water rescues, flooded homes and clogged freeways.

"We'll stay on the air as long as it's raining," Channel 7-KVIA (cable Channel 6) General Manager Kevin Lovell said. "When it's breaking news, we have the liberty and the obligation to stay with the story and keep people informed."

But getting to the story presented problems.

"We're all over the place trying to cover this story," said Channel 4-KDBC (cable Channel 3) Assignments Editor Larry Monarrez, whose crews encountered serious challenges covering the storms.

"We had one vehicle that got caught in the flood, but the crew is OK," Monarrez said.

KVIA also reported problems covering the flood story. One of the station's news photographers, Marco Jaquez, was nearly swept away by floodwaters.

"He's OK. Just a little water-logged," KVIA Executive Producer Fran Tucker said.



A man ran along the center barrier near the flooded intersection of Paisano and Executive Center in heavy rain Tuesday. Cars on both sides of Paisano could not cross the intersection.

Photo gallery: Tuesday's flooding cripples region
Photo gallery: Storm creates severe flooding
(Rudy Gutierrez / El Paso Times)

Channel 26-KINT (cable Channel 2) crews also faced difficult challenges.

"At its highest, I had two full crews working the floods, but getting around was a challenge," News Director Gustavo Barraza said.

Channel 14-KFOX (cable Channel 8) continued to broadcast even as water breached the studio, Assignments Editor Omar Hernandez said.

Channel 9-KTSM (cable Channel 10), KVIA, KFOX and KDBC all remained on the air live during the height of the flooding. KINT cut into regular program periodically throughout the day.

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