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**DIOCESE OF
ROCKFORD**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

STATEMENT

Lightning Strike Damages Marian Central Catholic High School

WOODSTOCK— At approximately 4:30 p.m., Monday, September 9, 2019, a thunderstorm passed through Woodstock. At that time lightning struck Marian Central Catholic High School's roof causing extensive damage to the chimney and roof. In addition, there is water damage along with some lightning damage in a few areas inside the school. Water seeped through the ceiling outside the auxiliary gym to the first floor.

Fortunately, everyone in or around the building at that time evacuated safely. Parents were notified of the incident and that school activities were cancelled, including the frosh/soph football game, varsity and JV soccer game and Athletic Boosters Meeting.

According to Vito DeFrisco, interim superintendent at Marian Central, a building engineer was contacted to determine structural damage and identify what and how to complete the building repairs. In addition the building inspector from Woodstock was contacted along with heating and cooling professionals and a board-up service to secure the building. NICOR gas will also conduct a pressure test and as a precaution, all gas service has been turned off.

As of this morning, Tuesday, Sept. 10, a building engineer will be on site to assess the current condition of the building and provide crucial information. Crews are working to clear debris caused by the lightning in order to minimize additional damage.

"Our main priority is to assure the safety of our students and staff. Once we are confident the building is stable and repairs can take place with minimal impact on the educational environment here at Marian, classes and activities will resume," DeFrisco said.

Principal Debra Novy is continuing to update Marian families and staff as clean up continues.

"We will continue to keep Marian families and staff updated, and only after all aspects of the building are determined to be functional and, above all, safe, will we reopen the school. We just want to express our thanks and appreciation to all those staff members who were at Marian at the time of the incident last night. They went above and beyond in order to ensure everyone's safety and

coordinate with emergency response services,” Novy wrote in this morning’s communication to parents.

In regard to athletic activities, DeFrisco said the school will follow IHSA guidelines relative to practices, games and athletics. Non-athletic extracurricular activities are cancelled until further notice.

Damage and repair estimates have not yet been determined.

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About Catholic Diocese of Rockford

Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 300,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, visit rockforddiocese.org