

GREENFIELD

Cooling centers open across city

The John Zon Community Center served as a cooling center for the city of Greenfield during Wednesday's heat. A group of people gathered to play pitch.

STAFF PHOTO/
PAUL FRANZ



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GREENFIELD — As the region braces for high temperatures of 91 degrees today, the city has opened cooling centers in several publicly owned buildings.

From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. today, cooling centers will be open at City Hall, the John Zon Community Center at 35 Pleasant St., the Greenfield Housing Authority Community Room at 1 Elm Terrace and the Oak Courts Common Room

off Elm Street. Additionally, the Greenfield Public Library at 412 Main St. will keep its cooling center open from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. today. Cooling centers were also open on Wednesday.

As Greenfield, along with most cities and towns in the state, is under a heat advisory, the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area posted on Facebook encouraging residents to cool off in the swimming area's 75-degree water.

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Others, such as James Street resident Emma Donnelly and Elm Street resident Emma Lehan, brought their children to the splash pads at Hillside Park to cool off and have fun in the sun.

“For a little kid, this is pretty epic,” Lehan said mid-day on Wednesday during 86-degree weather that continued to climb later in the afternoon. “It’s within walking distance from the house, so we’re able to go there frequently. Since they’re home from school now, we can take them somewhere where there’s other little kids to play with.”

National Weather Service Meteorologist Caitlyn Mensch said that temperatures this time of year usually average roughly 80 degrees, while today, July 17, is expected to bring temperatures ranging from 90 to 95 degrees.

Furthermore, Mensch explained that high humidity can make air temperatures feel hotter.

“The humidity adds an additional component and it makes it harder for you to cool off — that’s what creates another element of a weather forecast, what we call the heat index, or the ‘what it feels like’ temperature,” Mensch said Wednesday afternoon. “Today, we’re seeing temperatures rising into the lower 90s, but because of that humidity, it could be even feeling like lower 100s in some places.”



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Friends Autumn Scappace, 7, and Killian Demers, 5, both of Greenfield, stay cool on the splash pad at Hillside Park off Conway Street in Greenfield on Wednesday.

Mensch said the National Weather Service encourages residents to stay hydrated, be aware of cooling spots near them and avoid leaving children or animals in hot vehicles. She added that it’s important to recognize the signs of heat stroke and seek help if necessary.

“Even overnight, sometimes there’s little relief during periods like this. So any way to stay cool is always good. If you’re working outside, make sure that you’re taking a lot of frequent breaks. With the heat exhaus-

tion and heat stroke, knowing those signs is also incredibly important,” she explained. “Look before you lock — make sure that you’re not leaving any pets, children, elderly, in a parked car. ... There’s a lot of fatalities in the country all the time due to a child being left in a car.”

Greenfield Fire Chief Robert Strahan, in an interview Wednesday, said the Fire Department, on particularly hot days, has responded to medical calls for heat-related ailments or illnesses. He said reports of dehydra-

tion are most common.

Strahan also encourages residents to wear sunscreen, drink water and avoid staying out in the sun for long periods of time. He added that red, hot and dry skin, confusion and nausea are all symptoms of heat stroke and could require medical attention.

Those in search of cooling centers in neighboring communities are encouraged to call 211.

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