

Hard at work...



The New Way Singers, sponsored by Nebraska Christian College, performed in Norton June 14. The group of 36 high school students volunteered for service project work on Thursday before their next concert in McCook. Half the group worked at The Rock Christian Youth Center painting and cleaning while the other half painted a fence and the living room at The Haven.

— Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts



Tornados hit, but damage small

By PAT SCHIEFEN

GOODLAND — Goodland got lucky Friday as two tornadoes skipped across the area but did only small amounts of damage.

The first tornado, sighted about 1:03 p.m. about 15 miles southwest of town, stayed in open country. Weather Service officials said the second twister dissipated near Eighth Street and Wyoming, on the west edge of town.

The winds ripped shingles off of roofs and broke trees and the rain caused flooding when streets didn't drain fast enough.

Weather officials said most of the damage in town was caused from straight-line winds and flash flooding, not the tornadoes.

Friday started off with a break from the near-100 degree weather earlier that week. By noon, though, the clouds had turned ugly and two tornado sightings sent people scurrying for cover.

At least two buildings suffered roof damage. The Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah's Witness, 808 Wyoming, and Kurt Hill's house across the street at 801 Wyoming lost shingles on part of their roofs. Meteorologists said straight-line winds likely caused the damage.

Dairy Queen, 2402 Commerce Road, lost its entry doors to the winds, employees said, and a car belonging to owner Danny Whalen lost some windows.

The first tornado was reported at 1:03 p.m., 15 miles southwest of town and moving toward Goodland. The sirens went off in the city actually before the tornado was on the ground, said Al Pietrycka, a forecaster at the National Weather Service office near the Goodland airport.

A second tornado developed west of Goodland at 1:19 p.m. near the intersection of Eighth Street and County Road 18, a mile west of town. This tornado was eight yards wide and traveled east for about a mile before dissipating at Eighth and Wyoming, said Jerry Killingsworth, another forecaster at the Weather Service office.

That tornado was rated as a low

F1 on the Fujita Tornado Damage Scale, said the weather service, with winds from 73 to 112 mph. Damage was at the F0 range near the end of the tornado's path, Killingsworth said.

Most of the roof and tree damage in town was from straight-line winds from the storm's rear-flank down draft, said Pietrycka. It starting around Eighth and Wyoming and ran to 14th and Arcade in a line about a block wide.

Heavy rain, 2.45 inches in about two hours, caused flash flooding in the town, with water on Main as deep as a foot. The city crews blocked intersections with heavy equipment to keep people from driving through the water. Intersections on Caldwell and at 17th and Broadway were flooded.

Saturday, Goodland got .26 of an inch of rain for a total of 2.71 inches for the weekend, said Scott Mentzer, meteorologist in charge of the weather office here.

The first tornado remained over open country and produced minor damage to vegetation, said Pietrycka. It had a maximum width of 10 yards and length of a quarter of a mile. It was classed as an F0 tornado, the weakest type, with winds from 40 to 72 m.p.h.

The storms that produced the tornadoes developed in eastern Colorado before moving into northwest Kansas, said Pietrycka. By early evening, the line had moved on, causing wind damage in Logan and Sheridan counties.

A fire was reported at 2690 old U.S. 24, about seven miles east of Goodland, around 3 p.m. at the Keith Kenny place. The rural fire department responded, but not before the flames had consumed an out building. The fire was out by 4 p.m.

An ambulance went with the firemen, normal procedure when there was a structure fire. There was a power line down north of the fire on County Road 28.

"It could have been worse," said Crissy Conger, director of Sherman County dispatch. "No one was hurt."

Rumors are wrong, Oberlin girl still missing

OBERLIN — Despite rumors of her return, Chantelle Beneda is still missing, although she has contacted both her mother and a friend here.

Miss Beneda was last seen driving her 2004 Dodge Neon south on U.S. 83 on Friday, May 26. That was over 24 days ago.

Since then, her parents, Terese and Greg Vontz and Ron Beneda, all of Oberlin, haven't seen their daughter and have only heard from her twice.

Mrs. Vontz said her daughter text messaged her once on her cell phone and did the same to a friend. She said the messages were received on Friday, June 9, and Tuesday, June 13.

She said she has heard rumors

about her daughter having come back home, but that isn't true. Chantelle hasn't returned home or been found, said Mrs. Vontz.

Mrs. Vontz said they are still looking for her daughter, who weighs about 135 pounds, is 5 foot, 6 inches tall and has long, straight blonde hair, blue eyes and braces.

They think she is with Sean G. Fife, 21, who weighs about 150 pounds, is 5 foot, 9 inches tall and has short brown hair.

Although Miss Beneda has text messaged people here, she hasn't said where she is.

Anyone who hears from her is asked to call Decatur County dispatch at (785) 475-8100 or call 911.

A soldier is honored for stepping forward

Army Sgt. Jason Brannan, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, was singled out as an American who stepped forward.



Sgt. Brannan

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. Richard B. Myers often speaks of the long line of men and women in the military who have stepped forward when their country called.

In an awards ceremony for Sgt. Major James Gooden, Gen. Myers presented him a Silver Star for heroism in Vietnam. The general linked Sgt. Gooden and Sgt. Brannan as representatives of their generations.

"I'd go back to Iraq in a heartbeat," Sgt. Brannan said.

Sgt. Brannan was not your typical Army recruit. In 2002, he was working construction when he decided he wanted to participate in something bigger than himself. "I was making good money," he said. "A lot more than I would make as a soldier. But we're at war, and if I don't step up, then who will?"

He discussed the decision with his wife, Lindsey. "She was all for it," said Sgt. Brannan. The couple have two children.

He joined the Army as an infantryman and went through Airborne School. In March 2003, he arrived at the 82nd Airborne Division and deployed to Iraq almost immediately. "I was a new soldier, but the

NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) took me under their wings and continued training me even as we were doing operations," said Sgt. Brannan.

His unit was based south of Baghdad. He said he and his fellow soldiers bonded incredibly tightly during the deployment. During the deployment, he and his friends saw the insurgency grow.

He said he also saw the way terrorists targeted Iraqis trying to help their own people and the way American soldiers reached out to help Iraqi civilians. "You do what you have to," Sgt. Brannan said.

Sgt. Brannan is a recruiter in Leavenworth.

Sgt. Gooden who retired from the Army in 1980, lives closely and often stops in to speak with the

Army recruiters.

"When I heard the sergeant major was receiving the award, I knew I had to make it here," Sgt. Brannan said. "This is a connection between soldiers today and those that carried the torch before us. It's an honor to be here and witness this."

Sgt. Brannan is the son of Tom and Cathy Brannan, Norton.

New preacher coming for area churches

Two preachers are giving a new meaning to "trading places"

Kathy Aeillo, minister of the United Methodist Churches in Norcat, Clayton and Alma has been transferred to the churches in Courtland and Scandia.

Interestingly enough, the Rev. Ray Gilstrap from Courtland/Scandia has been transferred to take over the churches in Norcat, Clayton and Alma.

The Rev. Aeillo had been at the Alma church since January of

2002. The Norcat and Clayton churches were added to her duties in November of 2003. She leaves Friday for Scandia and her new position. She assumes her first duties on July 1 when she assists at a wedding and preaches her first sermon on July 2.

A farewell dinner for the Rev. Aeillo was held in Norcat on June 17. Kaye Strevey made a quilt that was presented to her as a going away gift.

The Rev. Gilstrap and his wife,


Jeanne, are expected to arrive June 27. They will live in Alma. He will begin preaching in Alma, Norcat and Clayton on July 2.

United Methodist pastors are appointed or assigned to local churches by the bishop and the six district superintendents in the Kansas West Annual Conference.

Happy 60th Mom

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