

Twisters hit farm buildings

Tornadoes ruin barns, buildings

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At least nine tornadoes swept through Decatur County on Thursday, with two touching down and leaving a trail of damaged barns and outbuildings across the area.

During the onslaught, which lasted a couple of hours, at least one home was picked up and moved seven feet, outbuildings were smashed or simply exploded, and the storm sirens in Oberlin were blown four times, sending people scrambling for shelter.

Patti Skubal, county emergency management director, said Dave Floyd, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, came up Friday to check the damage. He told her the county could have had up to 20 tornadoes on Thursday, but had nine confirmed for sure. Mrs. Skubal said that doesn't mean they all touched down.

She said she'd had several dozen calls about damage from the county, including five on Tuesday morning.

A local disaster has been declared for Decatur County, said Mrs. Skubal, and officials may ask for a federal disaster declaration. Basically, she said, that makes state resources available to victims of the damage.

Mrs. Skubal said she had a conference call scheduled for Tuesday afternoon to talk with authorities with the state asking for a federal declaration, which would allow financial assistance or low-interest loans for those who suffered major losses in the storms from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Decatur County was one of the ones that was hardest hit from that storm," she said.

Around 4:45 p.m., Mrs. Skubal said, the National Weather Service called and told her that tornadoes were heading directly for Decatur County and Oberlin. She said a command center was set up at the fire station on Penn Avenue.

At 5:25 p.m., dispatchers set off sirens in Oberlin. The wind was blowing and quarter-size hail was seen by spotters.

Nine minutes later the sirens went off again.

Traffic on the radio indicated a wall cloud, which can spawn a tornado, south of town moving northeast and another storm developing south of that one.

At the same time, a tornado was on the ground near the Lund Church Road southwest of Oberlin.

Another storm started to form at the same time, west of Kevin Wurm's home, which is on U.S. 83 near the Decatur-Sheridan County line.

At 5:45 p.m., the sirens blew again, this time the all clear, instead of the take cover.

"Dispatch you're blowing the all clear and not the take cover," someone said on the radio.

"Three miles southwest of Oberlin it's on the ground," said a spotter. "It's a big one."

At 5:52 p.m., it sounded like the tornado would hit part of the town. Another funnel was seen about five miles behind it.

Two minutes later, the sirens went off again. Three after that, the storm seemed to be coming at the hospital, in the southwest part of town. Despite the reports, the only damage recorded was to outbuildings southwest, west and north of town.

"We have multiple vortex tornadoes coming down right over the town of Oberlin," said a spotter.

"We're going to have some water in the streets," an officer reported. "Cass (Avenue) is running good."

Throughout the evening, more funnel clouds and hail hit the area. By 8:05 p.m., though, the all clear was blown.

Most of the damage, said Mrs. Skubal, seems to be in the Dresden area and near Jennings, and north of town along U.S. 83. One twister crushed grain bins at the feed yard and blew away a metal building north of there.

The county appraiser's office was trying to assess the damage this week.

On Sunday, said Mrs. Skubal, she went out and looked at the damage in the county.

Prairie Land Electric estimated damage to poles and wires at (See STORM on Page 10A)



ATORNADO THURSDAY crushed two grain bins (above) at the Decatur County Feed Yard north of town. The same storm system spawned a tornado that destroyed a garage (below right) and barn at the Bernie Vacura farm near Jennings. The tornado north of Oberlin left the machinery (below left) but swept away a metal outbuilding on the Howard Votapka farm, north of the feed yard on U.S. 83. — Herald photos by Dave Bergling and Othelia Vacura



Fancy wheels to take over town

It might seem like a step back in time Saturday as Main Street fills up with cars, trucks and motorcycles from years past.

The vehicles will line Penn Avenue most of the day Saturday, some with the hoods up and others with the doors open so spectators can get a look inside.

Sharleen Wurm, curator at the Decatur County Museum, said this is the seventh year for the annual Car Show and Summerfest, co-sponsored by the museum and KFNF Radio.

The show is a fund raiser for the museum, said Mrs. Wurm, with the money going to operational costs and maintenance.

All of the expenses for the museum have increased, she said, with the bills going up every year.

Maintenance on the 14 buildings is expensive, too, she said.

Plans for the car show include a "cruise-in" Friday in front of the museum at the south end of Main. Games will include a starter throw, hubcap throw and poker run, and people will be able to view the ve-

Car show to fill street

The Decatur County Museum/KFNF Car Show and Summerfest on Main Street, packed with activities for the family, starts Friday.

The plans for the show include:

FRIDAY

- 7 to 9 p.m. — "cruise-in" in front of the museum, south end of Main Street. hot dogs and sodas for donation.

SATURDAY

- 7 a.m. — pancake feed in the Old Bohemian Hall.
- 8 to 11 a.m. registration at the museum.
- 11 a.m.-1 p.m. — museum board

members and staff will grill pork burgers and bratwurst, near Farmers Bank and Trust.

- All day — Show and Shine on Main Street.

- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Terry Rose to sing on south Main Street.

- 1 p.m. — votes turned in for People's Choice Award/

- Poker run starts.

- 2 p.m. — starter throw contest, sponsored by Oberlin Automotive, south of The Bank.

- 2:30 p.m. — hubcap throw sponsored by Terrace Garden R.V. Park, same spot.

- 4 p.m. — trophies presented.

- Evening — the museum staff and board will serve barbecued beef, baked beans and chips at the Bohemian Hall.

businesses.

Vendors will be set up to sell kettle corn and funnel cakes.

At 7 a.m., the museum board and staff will cook pancakes in the Old Bohemian Hall for breakfast. Over

the noon hour, they will grill pork-burgers and bratwursts for lunch, and after the trophies are handed out at 4 p.m. they will serve barbecue beef, baked beans and chips in the hall for dinner.

Each meal will be offered for a donation.

Mrs. Wurm said the restrooms in the Decatur County courthouse will be open for the public throughout the day.

The museum will also be open all day, with admission set at 50 cents, instead of the normal \$5, because the museum is celebrating 50 years this year.

On Saturday, said Mrs. Wurm, the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce will be holding its annual community-wide garage sale. The county van will be available to pick up visitors near the museum and take them to the sales around town.

For information, call the museum at 475-2712.

Selden tractor show to roll in on Sunday

Dust the cobwebs off the lawn chairs and bring them out to the Selden city park Sunday for the 15th Antique Tractor and Car Show sponsored by the Selden American Legion.

The show will feature antique cars and tractors, collector vehicles, small engines and more.

The day starts with registration at the north end of Main Street at 9 a.m. Vehicles will be on display parked up and down Kansas Avenue, Selden's main street.

Activities include:

- 10 a.m. — horseshoe pitching contest on the south side of the tennis courts. Cash prizes.

- 11:30 a.m. — basketball free throw on the tennis courts. Medals given for first, second and third for grades 3-5 and 6-8.

- Noon — members of the Legion will grill hamburgers and hot dogs and serve barbecue pork sandwiches, baked beans

and drinks.

- 1 p.m. — kiddie tractor pull for grades 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10.

- 3:30 p.m. — parade begins, going past the north end of the park.

- Throughout the day — kids can ride the barrel and wagon trains and find hidden treasure in the stock tank full of corn.

Rose Bainter and Vic Wagoner Jr. will sing and play in the park during lunch. The Old-Time Bank to perform in the Sacred Heart parish hall in the afternoon.

Tractors owners will have the chance to test their abilities with a barrel-rolling contest and washer drop.

The Legion plans to give away a pedal tractor, an all-terrain tri-cycle and other prizes. Tickets are available at The Bank in Selden or at the announcer's stand. For information, call (785) 386-4331 or 386-4481.