



The force of a 200 mile per hour wind can be seen in this photo. (photo by Dave Saville/FEMA News)

## Where were you when the tornado struck?

(The following accounts were originally printed in the April 26, 2001 edition of the Dispatch.)

**By JOHN D. MARTIN**

The following brief comments were submitted to the Hoisington Dispatch from people hit by the storm. People who appear to have lost everything are generally upbeat and giving thanks that their own family's lives were spared.

**Rev. Carl Willis:**

"We were watching the TV reports about an intense line of storms headed our way. It was suggested we take shelter so we went to the basement. After about 10 minutes I came upstairs to check the weather report again. I heard the noise and things hitting the house. I got back downstairs and got my wife and kids in a corner and laid on top of them. In the midst of all the destruction I keep hearing about God's grace

and how He had people in the right place or away from their home. The people affected are going about with their heads up taking care of the task ahead of them. Everyone is positive, and I am thankful for the outpouring of help from unexpected sources."

**Blake Herres:** "Everyone was out of the house. One daughter was at the prom and I was on my way home from Manhattan. I about got arrested twice trying to get to my house. A state trooper had his hand on his handcuffs but he let me go. I feel lucky that the house was empty and we were not killed. We are waiting on insurance adjusters before we will know what to do. I am overwhelmed by the support."

**Cindy Rodie:** "We were on our way back from Wichita and got to Great Bend about 9:30. We had to park our car at Kaiser's Total station and walk into town. I was in

tears when I saw the top half of the house gone. We are lucky because we saved most of our personal records and the kids' pictures. We were lucky we were not home. Farm Bureau wrote us a check and we went down and paid off the bank and put the rest in savings. We don't know if we will rebuild or not."

**Junior Ogle:** "I was in my car by the water tower when I saw this wall of water. I made a U-turn to head back to the house. Stuff started hitting the car and then the sun roof left the car. The next thing I remember is being in the front of the hospital with the car wrapped around a tree. The tree broke off and pinned my car down which is what saved me."

**Jan Peterson:** "I was at home talking on the phone. My son was at the prom and my husband was out of town. I made it to the basement and talked to one person - God."



The Hoisington city building became a place of refuge for residents in need immediately after the tornado. The location also served as Red Cross headquarters. (courtesy photos)

## What was hit?

**Businesses Demolished by the Tornado**

- Cardinal Massage
- Cardinal Pharmacy
- Cardinal Plaza Lanes
- Charles Haynes - Atty
- Clara Barton Clinic
- Dairy Queen
- Dr. Blake Herres - DDS
- Dr. Keith Ritter - DDS
- Dr. Mike White - OD
- Dr. Tyler Schremmer - OD
- Gina's Creations
- Hoisington Inn
- Hoisington Medical Clinic
- Midwest Appliance
- Precious Blessing School
- Metropolitan Life
- Sunflower Insulation
- Town & Country Super Market

Vicki's Hair Care  
Worth Heating & Electric

**Businesses with Major Damage**

Suburban Amusements  
Landmark Savings Bank  
Scott's Welding

**Overall Statistics**

Total Business/Residences Destroyed: 183  
Total Business/Residences Major Damage: 78  
Total Business/Residences in the Path & Impact Area: 800  
Head of Household moving to other Cities after Tornado: 60  
Businesses that did not rebuild: 6



## TORNADO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- To begin preparing, you should build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information. In any emergency, always listen to the instructions given by local emergency management officials.
- Be alert to changing weather conditions. Look for approaching storms.
- Look for the following danger signs:
  - Dark, often greenish sky
  - Large hail
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
  - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.
- If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.



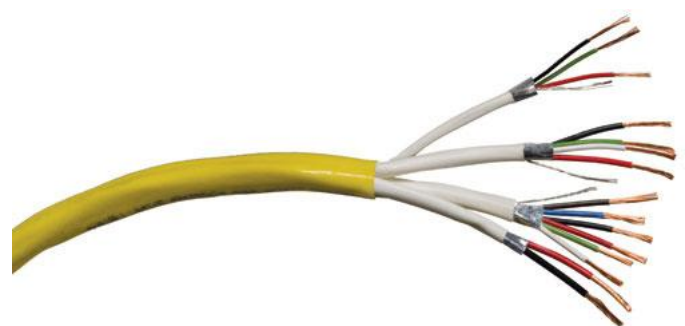
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