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# Eyes On The Storm



CHRIS ALLINGTON/INTO THE RFD PHOTOGRAPHY  
This photo of a lightning strike through a rainbow was taken near Dodge City, Kansas. Although the system was weakened at the point this shot was taken, it had earlier produced nearly baseball-size hail and straightline winds of 100 mph in western Kansas.

## Local Photographer Finds His Muse In The Sky

BY NATHAN JOHNSON  
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At a young age, Chris Allington sought to capture the beauty and mystery of the natural world through the lens of a camera. A family vacation to Yellowstone National Park is the first time he recalls seriously picking up his mother's film camera. Allington jokes that he hates to think about how much film he ruined on that trip.

The experience awakened a passion for nature photography that has led Allington to win a *National Geographic* photo contest and have his work featured in England's *Daily Telegraph*.

"When I went to Yellowstone, it really opened my eyes to things that are out there. I want to bring that to people in some small way," he said. "It seems that, as a society, we're getting away from the appreciation we have for the natural world. I hope that when people see my images, whether it's a landscape or a thunderstorm or whatever else, it makes them want to know more about the world around them."

Allington grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, but moved to the Nebraska side of the Lewis and Clark Lake near Crofton in 2011. He said it was a good move.

"If I lived in Omaha, I wouldn't experience things like bobcats living in my yard," Allington stated. "I feel more grounded here, where I have nature around me."

One of Allington's favorite photos was taken near Dodge City, Kansas. It is a surreal image of a rainbow with a lightning bolt forking through the middle of it.

Another favorite photo is of a tornado in Shawnee, Oklahoma, throwing up debris.

The photos that Allington takes are sometimes so surreal that it's hard to believe that they are real.

"Thunderstorm structures are pretty incredible," he said. "You have to be in the right position to see some of that stuff. If you're just watching storms from home, you're not going to see that a lot of the time. There is a lot of work that goes into it. Every spring, I put a lot of miles on my car and spend a lot of time off from work just trying to find clouds."

Those familiar with storm systems will be clued in to Allington's interests when they see the name of his photography business. It's called "Into the RFD," or the "rear flank downdraft." The RFD is a region of dry air that wraps around the back of a mesocyclone in a supercell thunderstorm.

"I'll shoot portraits occasionally if a family member or a close friend is getting engaged or something, but I've always been more fascinated by the sky," Allington said. "Growing up in Nebraska, I always thought

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COURTESY PHOTO  
Chris Allington is seen here chasing a storm in western South Dakota. "It seems that, as a society, we're getting away from the appreciation we have for the natural world," he said. "I hope that when people see my images, whether it's a landscape or a thunderstorm or whatever else, it makes them want to know more about the world around them."



CHRIS ALLINGTON/INTO THE RFD PHOTOGRAPHY  
This photo of an EF-2 tornado along Interstate 40 was taken in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The debris in the picture is pieces of trees and a semi trailer that was ripped apart and lofted into the air. Allington said the driver had some minor injuries but was OK.

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