

# Joplin

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than 300 people last month across the South, Joplin was smashed by just one exceptionally powerful tornado.

Not since a June 1953 tornado in Flint, Mich., had a single twister been so deadly. That storm also killed 116, according to the National Weather Service.

Authorities were prepared to find more bodies in the rubble throughout this gritty, blue-collar town of 50,000 people about 160 miles south of Kansas City.

Gov. Jay Nixon told The Associated Press he did not want to guess how high the death toll would eventually climb. But he said: "Clearly, it's on its way up."

Seventeen people were pulled alive from the rubble. An unknown number of people were hurt.

While many residents had up to 17 minutes of warning, rain and hail may have drowned out the sirens.

Larry Bruffy said he heard the first warning but looked out from his garage and saw nothing. "Five minutes later, the second warning went off," he said. "By the time we tried to get under the house, it already went over us."

As rescuers toiled in the debris, a strong thunderstorm lashed the crippled city. Rescue crews had to move gingerly around downed power lines and jagged chunks of debris as they hunted for victims and hoped for survivors. Fires, gas fumes and unstable buildings posed constant threats.

Teams of searchers fanned out in waves across several square miles. The groups went door to door, making quick checks of property that in many places had been stripped to their foundations or had walls collapse.

National Weather Service Director Jack Hayes said the storm was given a preliminary label as an EF4 — the second-highest rating assigned to twisters based on the dam-



DAVID EULITT/KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

After finding his wedding ring box for his fiancée, Jarod Stice found a for sale sign in his yard and pushed it into the ground outside his home Monday morning following a tornado that swept through the center of Joplin the previous evening.

age they cause.

Hayes said the storm had winds of 190 to 198 mph. At times, it was three-quarters of a mile wide.

Some of the most startling damage was at St. John's Regional Medical Center, where staff had only moments to hustle their patients into the hallway. Six people died there, five of them patients, plus one visitor.

The storm blew out hundreds of windows and caused damage so extensive that doctors had to abandon the hospital soon after the twister passed. A crumpled helicopter lay on its side in the parking lot near a single twisted mass of metal that used to be cars.

Dr. Jim Riscoe said some members of his emergency room staff showed up after the tornado with injuries of their own, but they worked

through the night anyway.

"I spent most of my life at that hospital," Roscoe said at a triage center at Joplin's Memorial Hall entertainment venue. "It's awful. I had two pregnant nurses who dove under gurneys ... It's a testimony to the human spirit."

Once the center of a thriving mining industry, Joplin flourished though World War II because of its rich lead and zinc mines. It also gained fame as a stop along Route 66, the storied highway stretching from Chicago to Santa Monica, Calif., before freeways diminished the city's importance.

The community, named for the founder of the area's first Methodist congregation, is now a transportation crossroads and manufacturing hub. It's also the hometown of poet Langston Hughes and "Gunsmoke"

actor Dennis Weaver.

Major employers in and around the city include electronics manufacturer LaBarge Inc., colleges such as Missouri Southern State University and hospitals and clinics. Agriculture is also important to the economy.

As the tornado bore down on their trailer home, Joshua Wohlford, his pregnant girlfriend and their two toddlers fled to a Walmart store. The family narrowly escaped after a shelf of toys partially collapsed, forming a makeshift tent that shielded them.

"It was 15 minutes of hell," Wohlford said.

At a Fast Trip convenience store, another 20 people ran into a pitch-black cooler as the building began to collapse around them. They documented their experience with a video that was drawing tens of thou-

# Fact

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cultural property tax evaluations are available to the public.

In fairness to the businesses of the community, the *Press and Dakotan* contacted several businesses before publishing their information here.

We contacted more than 20 businesses in the community Monday, and only three gave permission for their 2010 tax evaluations to be printed.

It is important to note, none of the businesses have taken a stance on the opt-out by agreeing to let their tax information be published here:

- Yankton SD-LLC (Hy-Vee) is a retail property. Its 2010 assessed value as provided by Yankton County was \$5,370,300. Should the opt-out pass, it would mean an additional maximum of \$35,068 per year of the opt-out.

- Hasting Filters Inc. (Baldwin) is a manufacturer. Its 2010 assessed value as provided by Yankton County was \$3,850,000. Should the opt-out pass, it would mean an additional maximum of \$25,140 per year of the opt-out.

- First Dakota National Bank. Its 2010 assessed value as provided by Yankton County was \$3,786,946. Should the opt-out pass, it would mean an additional maximum of \$24,728 per year of the opt-out.

**YOUR NEWS!**  
**The Press & Dakotan**

# Counties

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arrangement, but Gregory County chose to go with another West River county rather than cross the Missouri River, Soulek said.

Douglas County Commission Chairwoman Karen Blume of Armour said she was grateful at Charles Mix County's willingness to partner.

"We couldn't do this on our own, because we don't have the (youth) population. We are very happy to have Charles Mix as a partner," she said. "We have members of our clubs in Douglas who live in Charles Mix, so it's a good match."

Blume sees tremendous potential for the new 4-H/youth advisor, beyond the traditional roles. The new advisor could reach out to schools and other venues for providing instruction in areas such as nutrition and life skills, she said.

Elsewhere in the region, neighboring counties are discussing possible partnerships.

Yankton, Charles Mix and Union counties automatically qualify for a half-time 4-H advisor provided by the state. Douglas, Bon Homme, Hutchinson, Turner and Clay counties must form partnerships to reach the 2,500 figure and participate in the state-sponsored program.

The partnerships remain under discussion, but all of the counties indicate they are committed to a strong 4-H and youth development program.

**BON HOMME:** Bon Homme County has talked with its neighboring counties and appears favoring a partnership with Yankton County, said Extension educator Amanda Larson.

A partnership offers a number of opportunities for maintaining county identity while sharing resources, Larson said.

"Even though we would be partners, it doesn't mean that they would have Achievement Days together. We could still maintain our own fairs and Achievement days," she said.

"For some of the smaller events, we already partner. With the special foods contest, we have partnered with Hutchinson County for six of the last eight years. And we have partnered with Charles Mix for the horse show and other special events."

**CLAY:** Clay County is keeping open its options and has held discussions with Bon Homme, Yankton and Union counties along the border, said Extension educator Will Kennedy.

"We like the idea of a partnership of two or three counties," he said. "Our 4-H leaders want to stay in the state system and have those resources."

Clay County already works with other counties for programming but could keep its Achievement Days under a partnership, Kennedy said.

Yankton and Clay counties also share a common vision as they have extended their Extension youth outreach beyond 4-H, Kennedy said. Those areas include settings such as libraries, park and recreation programs, and Boys and Girls Clubs, he said.

County Commissioners have not taken formal action, but a recent meeting of more than three dozen 4-H supporters showed a strong consensus of partnering with Turner County, said Extension educator Deanna Gall.

The 4-H supporters presented the Hutchinson County Commissioners with a memo during last week's commission meeting, stating the 4-H supporters' backing of a partnership with Turner County, Gall said.

"We factored in a partnership for a 4-H advisor and keeping a full-time secretary when we turned in our (Extension) budget," she said. "With Turner County, it appears they said they are willing to go with a 4-H advisor and budget for it, while Hutchinson County is working with their budget and seeing how it goes. It's two different approaches."

The two counties could maintain their separate Hutchinson County Achievement Days and the Turner County Fair, which fall on different weeks, Gall said. The Hutchinson County 4-H program grew 10 percent this year and has hit 160 youths. A growing number showing interest in special-interest programs that could attract more youths to 4-H, she said.

"Everything will work out in the end," she said. "It will just take time."

**TURNER:** The Turner County Commissioners have created a verbal agreement to partner with Hutchinson County, said Extension educator Connie Strunk. The Turner County Commissioners will pass a formal resolution upon receiving agreement from Hutchinson County, she said.

"We proposed to the (Turner) commission to keep our secretary full-time and then hire the 4-H advisor in cooperation with another county. We would also keep our summer intern," Strunk said.

Turner County has seen 4-H growth and has about 260 members, Strunk said.

"There was a little bit of concern (about the Turner County Fair) if 4-H wasn't there, as 4-H and the fair go hand in hand," she said. "But I think we are going to continue with things the way they are."

**UNION:** The county, located in the extreme southeast corner of the state, already qualifies for a part-time 4-H advisor. However, Union County has talked with Bon Homme, Yankton and Clay counties about a partnership, said Commission Chairman Doyle Karpen.

Union County has around 200 members in its 4-H program and would be willing to hold its Achievement Days on an alternate week with another county, Karpen said.

"Personally, I would like to see a partnership. Maybe we can help Clay County," he said. "That would give us the flexibility of more than just 20 hours a week (with a half-time 4-H advisor). We would be able to get additional hours."

However, Union County is beginning its budget process and needs an idea of where it stands, Karpen said.

"We have to see if anybody wants to play together in the same sandbox," he said. "If we wait to partner up, there may not be anyone else on the dance floor."

# Out On The Town

**MAY 27, 28, 29**  
**Fast Five**  
Fri. 7:30 PM • Sat. 7:30 PM • Sun. 4 PM  
Students \$2.00 Adults \$5.00  
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**Buffet With Salad Bar**

**Every**  
**Wednesday**  
**5 to 9pm**  
**Joe's Substation**  
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**Trivia Question...**  
**What is the distance from Yankton to The Argo Hotel & Steakhouse in Crofton, NE?**  
**Answer...**  
**14 Miles**  
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**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
**Thursday**  
5-7pm - Hamburger/Pizzaburger & Fries \$5.00  
6-7pm - Domestic Beers \$1.50  
**Friday**  
Ribs or Menu  
Serving 5:30-8:00  
**Saturday**  
TBA  
Serving from Menu 5:30-8:00  
**Bingo Wed. at 7:00pm**  
**Sunday at 6:30pm**  
**Happy Hour M-F 4:30-7:30**  
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You're invited to a  
**Garden Party**  
Sunday, June 5 • 1-4pm  
(Rain Date: June 12)  
Cramer Kenyon Heritage Home  
509 Pine St., Yankton Please attend our historic social.  
Garden Tours & Walking Tours of Historic Homes in the Area  
Entertainment begins at 2pm ~ Paddy Homan, Vocalist from Corr, Ireland and the Yankton Children's Choir  
Light refreshments will be served. Please bring lawn chairs.  
Donations welcomed & appreciated. (No house tours given this day)

Relax and Enjoy the  
Outdoors With...  
**The Outback Band**  
Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>  
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Lunch Menu Starts After Memorial Day  
**June 15<sup>th</sup> Wing Eating Contest**  
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