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A man and woman look through the wreckage in Shawnee, Okla., Monday afternoon. A massive tornado that packed winds up to 200 miles per hour roared through suburban Oklahoma City, killing at least 51 people. Officials at two hospitals say they had treated more than 140 patients, including about 70 children. (Marcus DiPaola/Xinhua via Zuma Press/MCT)

Tornado Tears Up Oklahoma

At Least 51 Dead In Outbreak

BY TIM TALLEY
Associated Press

MOORE, Okla. — A monstrous tornado at least a half-mile wide roared through the Oklahoma City suburbs Monday, flattening entire neighborhoods and destroying an elementary school with a direct blow as children and teachers huddled against winds up to 200 mph. At least 51 people were killed, and officials said the death toll was expected to rise.

The storm laid waste to scores of buildings in Moore, a community of 41,000 people about 10 miles south of the city. Block after block lay in ruins. Homes were crushed into piles of broken wood. Cars and trucks were left crumpled on the roadside.

The National Weather Service issued an initial finding that the tornado was an EF-4 on the enhanced Fujita scale, the second most-powerful type of twister.

More than 140 people were being treated at hospitals, including about 70 children. And search-and-rescue efforts were to continue throughout the night.

Tiffany Thronesberry said she heard from her mother, Barbara Jarrell, shortly after the tornado.

"I got a phone call from her screaming, 'Help! Help! I can't breathe. My house is on

top of me!'" Thronesberry said.

Thronesberry hurried to her mother's house, where first responders had already pulled her out. Her mother was hospitalized for treatment of cuts and bruises.

Rescuers launched a desperate rescue effort at the school, pulling children from heaps of debris and carrying them to a triage center.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin deployed 80 National Guard members to assist with rescue operations and activated extra highway patrol officers.

Fallin also spoke with President Barack Obama, who offered the nation's help and gave Fallin a direct line to his office.

Many land lines to stricken areas were down, and cell-phone networks were congested. The storm was so massive that it will take time to establish communications between rescuers and state officials, the governor said.

In video of the storm, the dark funnel cloud could be seen marching slowly across the green landscape. As it churned through the community, the twister scattered shards of wood, awnings and glass all over the streets.

Chris Calvert saw the menacing tornado from about a mile away.



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STARING AT STATE



Sioux Falls O'Gorman golfer Annie Simon watches her drive sail down the fairway during opening round action of the South Dakota State AA Girls Golf Tournament, which began Monday at Yankton's Hillcrest Golf and Country Club. O'Gorman, the defending champion, owned the lead after the opening day. For details, see page 8. (James D. Cimburek/P&D)

Coordination Of Care

Avera Sacred Heart, YMC Start Hospitalist Program

BY NATHAN JOHNSON
nathan.johnson@yankton.net

In order to improve patient care and keep up with the latest trends in the health field, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital (ASHH) and the Yankton Medical Clinic (YMC) have cooperated to create a hospitalist program.

A hospitalist is a physician who specializes in the care of patients admitted to a hospital.

At ASHH, a YMC hospitalist will be on site from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. The hospitalist program started last week.

"The physician is going to be readily available to answer patient and family questions and educate them about illnesses," said Pam Rezac, president and CEO of ASHH. "The doctor can tell them what care they will have to be mindful of when they are dismissed and will really make the whole process of healing for the patient much better. We want to make sure the patient has a successful outcome. That communication and teaching is going to be invaluable to them."

"We do expect with the hospitalist program that it will actually reduce the length of stay because there won't be delays waiting for physicians as patients move from treatment to treatment or test to test," she added. "It will expedite the process."

As medical knowledge expands, so does the need for the specialization of doctors, said Dr. Beth Mikkelsen, one of two hospitalists who will be getting the new program off the ground. The

other physician is Dr. Francine Mousseau, who will start in June. Both specialize in internal medicine.

"The fund of knowledge one needs to be good at what you do is getting to be too broad to do both inpatient and outpatient medicine," Mikkelsen said. "This community needs a hospitalist service to remain competitive, not in terms of the kind of care we deliver because we're well known for giving very good care, but

"We want to make sure the patient has a successful outcome. That communication and teaching is going to be invaluable to them."

PAM REZAC

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KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Dr. Beth Mikkelsen is one of two hospitalists that are getting a new Avera Sacred Heart Hospital/Yankton Medical Clinic hospitalist program started. A hospitalist will be stationed at Avera Sacred Heart and oversee patient care from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day of the week. Mikkelsen sees a lot of advantages in the program. "It's very clear that, when you have a hospitalist, the length of stay for patients is shorter and re-admission rates are better," she said.

FEMA Coordinating Disaster Response In South Dakota

By The Associated Press

PIERRE — Federal officials have been meeting with state and local officials in South Dakota to coordinate the dispersal of emergency funding to help affected areas recover from a three-day snowstorm last month that caused millions of dollars in damage.

President Barack Obama earlier this month approved a disaster declaration for Douglas, Hutchinson, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, Shannon and Turner counties as well as the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Federal Emergency Management Agency representatives met with state officials in Pierre on Friday and will be meeting with local officials this week to discuss reimbursements for work done during and after the storm, the *Capital Journal* reported. That can include everything from

infrastructure repairs to debris removal to police overtime pay. FEMA can cover 75 percent of the costs.

"They do what they do to respond to the emergency; we come in later and help with the financial burden," FEMA spokesman Randy Welch said.

The storm April 9-11 dumped more than 2 feet of snow on the reservation, and an ice storm in eastern South Dakota knocked out electricity to about 115,000 people. Preliminary estimates show the storm caused more than \$11 million in damage to public and private nonprofit property.

Heavy snows do not often cause enough damage to qualify as emergencies, according to Welch.

"Winter storms are an unusual cause for disasters. It's usually the tornadoes, floods and hurricanes," he said.



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Last year's drought caused considerable stress on some area lawns, forcing many homeowners to reseed their grass and take special measures to keep their turf alive.

Pain In The Grass

Drought Conditions Left Many Area Lawns In Tough Shape, But There Are Steps That Can Help

BY ANDREW ATWAL
andrew.atwal@yankton.net

As of May 14, the entire state of South Dakota remained under a drought, with levels ranging from abnormally dry to exceptionally dry. The entire state of Nebraska also remains under a drought.

Officials at South Dakota State University Extension are offering tips to area residents on how they can maintain their lawns and gardens during a drought and in preparation for the hotter summer temperatures.

Some lawns in the area are already showing stress from the drought and are needing to be reseeded.

"One of the most important things people can do is to decide, at the start (of a drought), how much they are willing to water and what lawn and garden conditions they are willing to accept," said Amanda Bachmann, consumer horticulture field specialist

at SDSU. "If your area is under a water restriction, you might not have much choice about the watering part of the equation. It really helps to go into the summer with a realistic expectation of how your yard can look."

David Chalmers, professor and turfgrass SDSU extension associate, wrote in an article on iGrow.org explaining that any type of seeding, including overseeding an existing lawn or just starting a new lawn, needs moist soil and irrigation for seeds to germinate and seedlings to develop.

"Water availability in South Dakota is an annual challenge in growing cool season grass lawns like Kentucky bluegrass, fine-leaf fescue and turf-type tall fescue," the article states. "Chances are it will be difficult to maintain good quality turf all summer without supplemental irrigation."

The article recommended that if your

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