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# Delmont Drilled



Little remains of the century-old Zion Lutheran Church, which was destroyed by the Sunday morning tornado which devastated parts of Delmont. Gov. Dennis Daugaard visited the Douglas County community, which has been evacuated for safety reasons. PHOTO: ELIZABETH "SAM" GROSZ

## 9 Hurt After EF-2 Tornado Slams Town



PHOTO: ELIZABETH "SAM" GROSZ  
The "Onion House" stands along Main Street in Delmont, which was hit hard by Sunday morning EF-2 tornado with peak winds estimated at 130 miles per hour.

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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DELMONT — The approximately 250 residents of this Douglas County community have been evacuated following Sunday morning's tornado which devastated parts of town.

It's a Mother's Day the town won't soon forget. The morning began with a tornado touching ground around 10:30 a.m. about three miles east of Wagner, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). The twister kept traveling and veered in a north to northeast direction, missing Armour but smashing into Delmont around 11 a.m.

The NWS has classified the storm as an EF-2 tornado, with winds peaking at an estimated 130 miles per hour. More than 20 buildings were damaged, and injuries were reported but no fatalities, according to the South Dakota Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Officials have confirmed nine injuries resulted when the storm hit Delmont, said DPS spokesman Tony Mangan.

"All but two (of the injured persons) have been treated and released," he said. "One was admitted to the (Douglas County Memorial) hospital in Armour, and the other was transported to a Sioux Falls hospital. The extent of the injuries (is) not yet known."

Media reports indicated some of the injured persons were taken to Avera St. Benedict Hospital in Parkston. No further information was available from hospital officials.

Zion Lutheran Church and Delmont's new metal fire hall have been destroyed by the twister, according to *Press & Dakotan* correspondent Elizabeth "Sam" Grosz. She and her husband, Terry, live in Delmont, and she also operates an art studio in the town.

Delmont residents were allowed to gather medications and other essentials before leaving town, Sam Grosz said. Once residents left Delmont, they were not allowed to re-enter the community, she added.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has arrived Sunday afternoon in Delmont to inspect damage from the tornado. He also spoke with residents at an information meeting held Sunday night at the Tripp-Delmont High School gymnasium in Tripp.

"At the meeting in Tripp, the governor gave information about returning (Monday) to Delmont," Sam Grosz said. "Those who have property loss are able to go through the remains starting at 10 a.m. If you don't have property loss, you're not to go back into the town."

Delmont residents were asked to leave the community for safety reasons, Mangan said.

Local and state officials asked the residents to leave because of concerns about unsecured propane tanks. There also is no electric, water or telephone service.

The city has been closed to non-residents as well. People who

TORNADO | PAGE 3

## MMC Graduates Take Next Step, Eye New Beginnings

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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With college degree now in hand, Derek Blumenstock is ready to join the family business. But those plans will need to wait four more years.

Blumenstock received his bachelor's degree during Saturday's commencement exercises at Mount Marty College. He graduated summa cum laude — with highest honors — with a biology major and chemistry minor as his pre-professional studies.

As far as his formal education, he's only halfway to his goal.

"I'm going to optometry school at the University of Houston, so I have four more years of school to go," he said. "My dad is an optometrist in O'Neill (Nebraska), and I eventually plan to join him. We can expand the practice, and I can have my own practice someday."

Around 125 students received degrees during Saturday's ceremony at Cimpl Arena. In the moments before graduation, Blumenstock texted messages with an apparent sense of urgency.

"I'm texting my family to see how they're doing," he said. "I'll be watching for them (in the crowd)."

Blumenstock graduated from O'Neill St. Mary's High School and found Mount Marty offering exactly what he wanted in addition to continuing his Catholic education.

"I came here because I wanted to play baseball, because of a scholarship and because I could have a small class size," he said. "I wanted to go to a small private school and have that personal connection with my teachers."

MMC turned out to be everything and more, he said.

"The teachers, the sports — I wouldn't change anything," he said. "Today, at the (baccalaureate) homily, Father talked about all the experiences that are so valuable. The things you learn in college aren't just in the classroom but also the extracurricular activities."

As for his professional plans, Blumenstock earned a spot in optometry school with his high test scores on the entrance exam. He also stands to benefit from the experience gained working at his father's clinic. The MMC senior learned he was accepted to optometry school at the beginning of the semester, allowing him to enjoy his final months of college.

As an alumnus, Blumenstock plans to stay abreast of MMC



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

State legislator and longtime magazine publisher Bernie Hunhoff, a Mount Marty College graduate, delivered the keynote address at MMC's spring commencement exercise Saturday at Ladie E. Cimpl Arena.

news and friends. But for now, he's ready for what lies ahead.

"College has been so much fun," he said. "It's going to be a big change moving to Houston, which is the fourth largest city in the nation. But I'm excited to have the experience, and I'm excited to move on to the next

step in my life."

### OTHER GRADUATES

Among the other graduates, Zach Bauman of Sioux Falls was talking with friends as he awaited

MMC | PAGE 2

### Nebraska

## Conservative Legislature Tackling Liberal Issues

BY ANNA GRONEWOLD  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Conservatives dominate Nebraska politics, but at times this session, the debate has seemed more in line with California or Massachusetts than the Cornhusker State.

From increased support for repealing the death penalty and raising the fuel tax to calls for legalizing medical marijuana and expanding the protections for gay and lesbian workers, lawmakers have been spending a lot of time on left-leaning legislation.

Not everyone likes it. "I have no problem with debate," Republican Sen. Bill Kintner, of Papillion, said. "I just wish we were debating bills that cut our taxes, that secure our liberties and protected life."

Kintner and other conservatives note

NEBRASKA | PAGE 11