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FULDA — When Wednesday night's storm swept through the area, community members were quick to lend a hand, and on Thursday, people were thankful the damage was not worse.

“It is amazing to see how people care,” said Christy Riley, the Murray County Community Relations director. “The community came together quickly to help. We’re really lucky it wasn’t a grand-scale disaster.”

Spotters from Fulda, Slayton, Avoca, Currie and Dovray fire departments were activated at 5:49 p.m. Wednesday, along with spotters from the [Southwest Minnesota Amateur Radio Emergency Services \(ARES\)](#), who relayed information to law enforcement in the field.



This photo was taken Wednesday night and shows a camper overturned on a farm near the Nobles/Murray County line. It is located near Nobles County 9. The National Weather Service confirmed Thursday a tornado did touch down here. (Submitted Photo)

Dispatch received a call at 6 p.m. about a tornado touchdown at the John Cuperus residence in Seward Township, Nobles County.

According to Murray County Deputy Sheriff Randy Donahue, a flurry of calls followed, reporting power outages, downed power lines and possible tornado sightings.

At 6:26 p.m., a 911 call reporting a touchdown in rural Fulda on 41st Street came in, along with a report of an injury. One house was demolished, and a female resident, Terri Stevens, suffered a knee injury while diving into a closet. She was later treated and released from the Murray County Hospital.

“She came back to the scene later that night on crutches,” Donahue reported. “There were some fire department personnel still on the scene, and we were able to get into the house and salvage a few things — some belongings, a few pictures.”

The closet Stevens jumped into saved her life, Donahue added.

“It was the only salvageable part of the house,” he explained. “She chose a lucky spot to go into.”

The neighboring farm house was intact, but several outbuildings were destroyed. The livestock seemed to be unharmed.

Donahue was pleased with the response from county volunteers, remarking that every fire department in the county had people spotting. With ARES helping, the flow of information was constant and accurate.

“There is a definite benefit to having guys like (ARES) that have no jurisdictional boundaries,” he said. “We maintain our own vehicles and equipment and do a real service to the community.”

Although there was some severe property damage, Donahue is happy things turned out as well as they did.

“We really dodged a bullet,” he remarked. “Property can always be replaced — lives can’t.”

Donahue said the National Weather Service would be by to examine the damage and code the severity of the storm.

“(The tornado) took street signs and just twisted them,” he added. “We’ll have crews out working on replacing them.”

The National Weather Service (NWS) of Sioux Falls, S.D., reported Thursday it received three confirmed reports of tornado spotting.

“We’re confident it was a tornado in that area, and that is what the radar was showing at that time,” said Bryan Ruby, a NWS meteorologist. “The first report of a touchdown was at 5:46 p.m. seven miles northeast of Wilmont.”

That report came from a trained tornado spotter. At 5:52 p.m., there were confirmed sightings five miles west of Fulda and two to three miles north of Fulda.

“There were two confirmed sightings by Fulda, but they are probably from the same track,” Ruby said.

In Nobles County, tornado sirens sounded at 5:35 p.m. for Worthington, Round Lake and Brewster. At 5:33 p.m. dispatch received a report of a tree that fell on a power line in the 700 block of Fourth Avenue, Wilmont. Several residents in the Wilmont area were without power until 8:30 p.m. Wednesday because of trees that fell on the power lines.

In O’Brien County, Iowa, dispatch received a report of a touchdown on Taft Avenue in Primghar around 6:25 p.m.

Several buildings, including a house and a machine shed containing farm equipment, sustained considerable damage, according to a report from O’Brien County Sheriff Michael Anderson.

The residents of the farm were in the basement of their house at the time of the touchdown, and no one was injured. Livestock also went uninjured. There were reports of downed power lines, which kept power company crews busy throughout the night as they attempted to repair damaged poles and lines.

According to Ruby, better weather is expected throughout the weekend.

“People are going to see temperatures in the 70s and are not likely to see any more severe weather at this point,” Ruby said.