

The Rebuilding of Greensburg – one year later

On May 4, 2007 an enormous tornado nearly wiped out the whole town of Greensburg, Kansas. It was the strongest recorded tornado since the May 3, 1999 Moore/Oklahoma City tornado. Despite a warning with a lead time of 26 minutes, the town of approximately 1500 persons still lost 11 lives. Some of those fatalities were in basements that unfortunately were filled with a tremendous amount of debris. Remarkably, the tornado took down the town's only water tower, which also stood above the infamous "hand dug" well and meteorite. The tornado also destroyed a dozen homes and a church that were south of town.

water tower before



and after the tornado



Greensburg remains in the news, almost on a daily basis as there has been much publicity about the town building back "green". Remarkable changes have taken place in such a relatively short period of time. Considering that around 800,000 cubic yards of debris had to be removed after the devastation and utilities had to be reconstructed, it's amazing what has taken place since last May.

Check out these links to the rebuilding and recovery efforts:

<http://greensburgks.org>

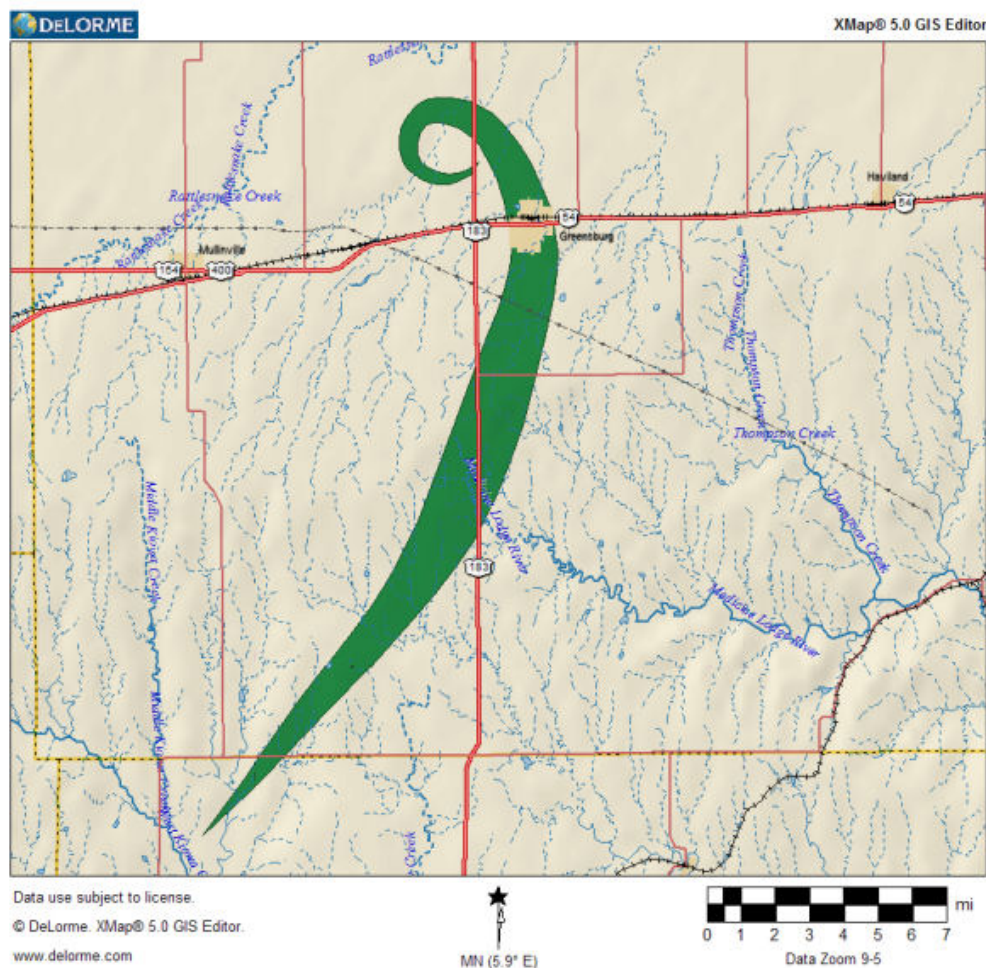
<http://bigwell.org>

<http://www.greensburgks.blogspot.com>

During the cleanup efforts, the Kansas Department of Transportation hauled nearly 40,000 truckloads of debris to several landfills that had to be constructed.



Much has been written about meteorological environment that ultimately produced not only the tornado that went through Greensburg, but also other tornadoes that caused loss of life and destruction to property in surrounding areas. Mike Umscheid, Meteorologist at the Dodge City National Weather Service office, has an excellent PowerPoint presentation on the event. It can be found by clicking [here](#). CAUTION!!!! This is a large file (27 MB) and could take a while to download on slower connections to the internet. In this presentation, information is given about just one mammoth supercell that produced 20 tornadoes, four of which were very large and long tracked! The track of the Greensburg tornado is shown below (click [here](#) for a larger version):



The first warning for the tornado that eventually went through Greensburg was issued at 855 PM and then the first warning specifically mentioning the town was issued at 919 PM. The tornado entered the south side of Greensburg at 945 pm. An audio file from [the NOAA Weather Radio station](#) covering the tornado warning can be heard by clicking [here](#).

For those that may have never been to Greensburg where most streets were completely tree lined, a few of the images below show how remarkable the damage was...

Downtown before the tornado



Downtown after



2 days after the tornado most of the streets were clear of debris but the devastation was obvious



Progress is being made...view looking northwest of the town as of late April



The following are some interesting facts about the tornado and the recovery efforts:

Or, just click [here](#) to download and view the fact sheet.

Facts about the May 4, 2007 Greensburg tornado	
65 minutes	The tornado began in Comanche county at 900 PM and ended at 1005 PM near Greensburg
1.7 miles	Maximum width of the tornado
28.8 miles	Distance the tornado travelled
205 MPH	Approximately the strongest surface wind in parts of town
5	Maximum damage rating on Enhanced Fujita Scale
11	Deaths from the May 4, 2007, tornado
961	Homes & businesses destroyed
216	Homes & businesses with major damage
307	Homes & businesses with minor damage

800000	Cubic yards of debris removed from the city
15	Agencies tasked by FEMA include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, AmeriCorps, the National Communications System, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (National Weather Service), the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U. S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development; Commerce/Economic Development; Health and Human Services; Treasury; Agriculture; Justice; Tennessee Valley Authority (electrical distribution specialists); and the General Services Administration
21	Greensburg residents hired by FEMA to work in recovery positions
265	Total number of low interest home and business loans approved by the SBA for Kiowa County, including Greensburg
936	Applications for Individual Assistance from residents of Kiowa County
7604	Number of volunteers working in Greensburg registered by AmeriCorps
39172	Meals served by American Red Cross mobile feeding stations through May 2007
57786	Hours of work logged by volunteers
\$2.8 million	Amount of disaster assistance approved under the Individuals and Households Program for Kiowa County and Greensburg applicants
\$12.7 million	Costs paid by FEMA for work assigned to other federal agencies to provide specialized work, technical assistance, personnel, etc to support the response to the Greensburg disaster.
\$23.1 million	Approved funding so far under FEMA's Public Assistance program. Projects include emergency response activities
\$30.7 million	Amount of low interest loans provided by the U. S. Small Business Administration to residents and businesses in Kiowa County

Source : The National Weather Service and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) - 4/25/08

Finally, click [here](#) for additional damage pictures taken after the tornado and recent pictures of what it looks like during April of 2008.

For further information or answers to questions....contact one of the following:

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