

# Greensburg blog: From our reporters' notes

**5 p.m., Friday**

HAVILAND -- On top of everything else they have to worry about, Greensburg residents now also have to worry about mosquitoes.

The blood-sucking pests are out in full force from the recent rains that drenched the area since the tornado a week ago today.

Cans of Off insect repellent are stacked on the front counter of Haviland Hardware and Convenience Groceries.

-- Deb Gruver

**4:45 p.m., Friday**

HAVILAND -- A group of men sit around the tables at Haviland Hardware and Convenience Groceries and debate the proper pronunciation of "Arkansas," as in the Arkansas River.

They decide to take a vote.

Is it pronounced "Ar-kan-saw" like Bill Clinton's home?

Or "Ar-Kansas" like our state?

They gripe that the big-city folks in Wichita call it "Ar-kan-saw," which they think is clearly wrong.

"I won't argue politics with you today, but I will argue with you about the river," a customer tells hardware store employee Joe Blair.

-- Deb Gruver

**3 p.m., Friday**

GREENSBURG -- For hotshot crews and smoke jumpers, disaster is a living.

But in Greensburg, they're seeing something a little different than the wildfires they typically battle.

The U.S. Forest Service has set up a support base camp in Greensburg. They've put up tents, yurts, hot shower stations and catering trailers to help emergency personnel, volunteers and city officials. They are helping the helpers.

"We're helping under a national response plan that allows FEMA to come to federal agencies for assistance," said public information officer Mike Ferris, who makes his home in Portland, Ore.

Ferris has seen a lot in his decades of working for an agency that goes in to places most people are evacuating.

"But I've never seen anything like this," he said of Greensburg, shredded by a tornado Friday night.

Crews are providing two hot meals a day and a sack lunch for anyone working the scene, such as police officers, troopers, volunteers and paramedics. Yurts -- canvas structures similar to tents -- are set up to sleep six people each. Americorps workers have been big customers, Ferris said.

The Forest Service got to Greensburg on Monday.

They expect to be here a while, barring major wildfires and emergencies elsewhere.

"We're committed to being here," Ferris said. "We were told to plan on 30 days."

-- Deb Gruver

**1:45 p.m., Friday**

GREENSBURG -- Kirstie Alley crawled into a cage, cooing to a black calf, at the makeshift animal shelter in Greensburg.

"He's decided he's going to poo on me," she said, ducking out of the way.

The actress brought in supplies for people and pets alike and was in Greensburg on Friday distributing them.

"We've got lots of toys," she said of cat and dog toys.

She also brought in food, bowls, cardboard carriers and other things that displaced animals need. The shelter is housing everything from newborn kittens to chickens and goats. One observer said it was a real Noah's Ark.

Alley was in Los Angeles when she learned about the tornado that wiped out the town and got in to Wichita on Thursday night. She would have come earlier, she said, but she was dealing with wildfires in Los Angeles.

"We got evacuated," she said, wearing a yellow Scientology Volunteer Ministry T-shirt under a longer blue wrap-around sleeveless blouse.

"I had some truckloads of things brought in," she said.

She and a group of Scientology volunteers set up a tent in Greensburg to give out bottled water, candy, T-shirts, sun hats, socks and other supplies.

She paid for all of it.

Alley is driving back and forth to Wichita and says she expects to be in Greensburg a while.

So do veterinarians William and Christan Skaer, who have been working day and night with animals needing care.

-- **Deb Gruver**

#### **4 p.m. Thursday**

Efforts to temporarily reopen Greensburg's Kwik Shop, 203 W. Kansas -- that's U.S. 54 near the Big Well -- have been slowed by water line issues.

Meghan Glynn, a spokeswoman for Kwik Shop's parent company, Kroger in Cincinnati, said the store will reopen as soon as possible, but the problems leave Kroger without a timetable.

-- **Bill Wilson**

**11 a.m. Thursday**

The tornado is not deterring Mother's Day celebrations in and around Greensburg. Dillons, Hallmark and florists have partnered on a project to deliver flowers and Mother's Day cards Sunday to shelters housing tornado victims, said Dillons spokeswoman Sheila Lowrie in Hutchinson.

-- **Bill Wilson**

**10:30 a.m. Thursday**

Greensburg is a very different place today. Now that the president has been and gone, the national media have packed up and left, too. Main Street in Greensburg was the staging ground for journalists -- not just us and the Wichita TV stations, but CNN, the Big Three networks, big newspapers. Only the local media seem to be left, though, and what used to be downtown Greensburg is eerily empty. Ironically, this is the first day since the storm that members of the media can enter town unescorted.

-- **Travis Heying**

**4 p.m. Wednesday**

UPDATE: ESPN reporter Steve Cyphers' piece on Greensburg is scheduled to initially air on "Outside the Lines First Report" at 2:30 p.m. Monday, May 14, on ESPN (Channel 32 on Cox cable in Wichita). It will be repeated on different editions of "SportsCenter" after that.

**1:55 p.m. Wednesday**

Veteran ESPN reporter Steve Cyphers was in Greensburg on Wednesday, said Nate Smeltz of ESPN's communications department. Cyphers is working on a story about how Greensburg's sports teams were receiving help from across the country. The piece is scheduled to run Monday on ESPN's "SportsCenter," which airs at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Cox Channel 32.

-- **Dan Loving**

**7:30 p.m. Tuesday**

The baby screech owl rescued in the aftermath of Greensburg tornado is making good progress toward recovery at the Eagle Valley Raptor Center, reports program director Ken Lockwood.

The baby has his eyes wide open and is eating normally, Lockwood said. His chances for making a full recovery are considered good.

The center has also received several baby great horned owls rescued in the aftermath of the storm. The center is a nonprofit rehabilitation center devoted to helping injured and orphaned birds of prey recover and return to the wild.

-- **P.J. Griekspoor**

**3:25 p.m. Tuesday**

Kelsey Heft, 18, signed a letter of intent Tuesday to play women's basketball at Friends University.

The Greensburg High School senior did so with her now-demolished school serving as the backdrop, pieces of broken glass and shards of brick all around her.

About 18 classmates from Greensburg High and 30 townspeople looked on along with television camera crews.

It was always a dream for Heft to sign to play college basketball. Doing so in front of the school so badly damaged by a tornado wasn't part of the dream.

Heft, however, said she was excited about the signing and had hoped many people would show up for it.

"We just put the word out and look how many people showed up to show their support," she said.

--**Fred Mann**

**2 p.m. Tuesday**

Rescuers are still picking over wreckage to look for survivors or victims. Today the fire team from Lincoln, Neb., was in charge of coordination; teams from several cities have been trading off duties. Among states that have sent rescue teams are California and Florida. Rescue searches will continue today and tomorrow.

"In my gut I think we've found everybody," said Greensburg Mayor Lonnie McCollum. "But we're not going to stop looking until we are sure."

--Fred Mann

### **1 p.m. Tuesday**

Just before noon today, several guys working outside the demolished post office found an American flag in what had been the back room of the post office.

Several men scrambled over the broken debris and raised that flag on the bent flag pole that used to stand outside the post office. At first, the flag drooped into the rubble, because the pole was bent at nearly a 45-degree angle downward. So the men, with a crowd looking on, scrambled over rubble, removed a whole lot of it, and made room for the flag to flutter in the muggy breeze without dragging its farther end into the rubble.

The crowd looked on in deep appreciation; many of the people in it looked deeply moved. The men who put up the flag were Bob Boyer, Paul Mazzanote and Tom Pappas from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and Dave Kenny and LaWayne Smith from the Kansas Air National Guard.

--Fred Mann

### **Noon Tuesday**

Divers from the Sedgwick County Fire Department made an important find today: the world's largest hand-dug well survived.

Two divers from a technical rescue team climbed 100 feet down metal stairs and into water, 10-12 feet deep.

"All we found are a ball cap and a whole bunch of coins," one diver said through a walkie-talkie.

As Fire Division Chief Stewart Segraves listened to his divers on a deck over the well, he remembered 30 years ago, throwing a coin into the well on a family trip to Colorado.

"It's important to this community. It's a landmark," Segraves said. "This is one of the few things a few hours of repair and cleanup and this would be open for business. It's one of the few things below grade that wasn't effected. That's pretty cool."

The opportunity to search the well is valuable training for the crew, Segraves said, because it's a "high-angle, confined space scuba dive."

The crew then secured the staircase for safety reasons with lumber, so no one would accidentally fall into the well. To barricade the well, they used an old door with a poster that read "Kansas: the real experience."

The well, dug over the course of a year by teams of farmers, cowboys and other local residents, was completed in 1888 and served as the city's water supply until 1932. Since it opened as a tourist attraction in 1939, the city estimates the stone-lined well has attracted more than 3 million visitors.

-- **Tim Potter**

**11:30 a.m. Tuesday**

Toby, the 3-year-old Keeshond who saved a woman's life Friday night in Greensburg, has been found.

The dog, who saved 93-year-old Mable McCormick from serious injury as the woman's house exploded, was located Monday night at a Pratt veterinary hospital by animal rescue specialists working the tornado disaster.

"We've got our hero back," said McCormick's daughter, Donna Hunter.

Ellen Querner, founder and president of PALS Animal Rescue, started the drive to find the fluffy gray and white dog with the raccoon face, contacting

rescuers at the Kansas Department of Transportation headquarters where lost pets are being collected.

That search quickly led to an unidentified Pratt veterinary clinic where Toby was located. He's now in Dodge City with relatives and his best friend Tabby, a 3-year-old Siberian Husky that also escaped injury when the twister destroyed McCormick and Hunter's home.

-- **Bill Wilson**

**11:15 a.m. Tuesday**

The Greensburg tornado should increase interest in an already growing part of the construction industry tornado-resistant buildings.

The industry already builds tornado-proof buildings, said Tom Dondlinger, president of Dondlinger & Sons Construction.

"I'd be willing to bet you that the only thing a tornado could do to the Epic Center downtown is knock out a bunch of windows," he said. "Look at the grain elevator that's still standing in Greensburg. The Epic Center is built on those principles."

The Wichita school district's new schools contain FEMA-designed safe rooms, Dondlinger said, and many local businesses include vaults that are built to withstand tornadoes.

"You can bet that people are going to talk more about it after the Greensburg tornado," he said.

-- **Bill Wilson**

**7 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- Exhausted, Carrie Hall clutched a black trash bag filled with her grandparents' belongings.

As she sat at a picnic table outside the Haviland High School, she talked about what going back to Greensburg was like on Monday.

"We all just bawled," she said.

She lives in Hesston now but grew up in Greensburg in a house now gone.

Her grandparents, Ray and Marvene Martin, lost most everything. Their home is still standing, but there's roof and water damage.

"My uncle's house is completely gone," Hall said of her uncle Daniel Martin.

Allowed back in Greensburg for the first time since Friday night, Daniel Martin, Hall said, grabbed his tools, hunting rifles and souvenirs from his Naval service in places such as Guam and the Phillipines. China. Beer steins from other countries.

"We were able to save like 10 percent of it," Hall said.

The roof of her grandparents' carport was in a tree in their backyard. A pine tree limb was shoved under the headlights of their car.

It's strange what survived and what didn't, she said. Two china dolls that Hall's grandmother kept pressing her to take home were in perfect condition. They'd been in the china cabinet.

Hall visited her father's grave at the cemetery, anxious to see if his headstone survived.

"It's still there," she said.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**5:20 p.m. Monday**

A happy postscript to the 4 p.m. item: Richard Huckriede, the man who staffed the soda counter at Hunter Drug, is safe and sound in Mullinville.

-- **Bill Wilson**

**4 p.m. Monday**

Donna Hunter, who worked at Hunter's Rexall Drug in Greensburg, sat in her Wichita hospital room Monday worrying about a co-worker.

She's heard nothing about Richard Huckriede, the elderly artist behind the soda fountain who created the floats, 400s and Green Rivers for young and old alike at the historic old-style soda fountain.

"I don't know if he made it," she said. "I just hope it's good news."

The drug store was a Greensburg gathering place, where farmers assembled to hash out the ups and downs of agriculture and where school kids wandered in for a "Dicky Drink," Hunter said. Her injuries were triaged in front of it Friday night "and I had no idea where I was," she said.

"Richard's in the Kiowa County Museum," she said. "They did a big cardboard cutout of him awhile back and recreated a little drug store.

"I just hope he's all right."

-- **Bill Wilson**

**2:30 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- The street in front of Haviland High School looks like an insurance industry trade show.

Major insurance companies have glitzy mobile trailers parked out front with satellite capability. High-tech toys help agents and adjusters access customer records. But the gadgets are also helping customers.

"Free Internet access" signs are posted along the sidewalk for people who want to check e-mail messages.

Agents are everywhere, wearing business polos with their company logos.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**2:20 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- Without thinking twice about it, Steve Dillon and Steve Sigley drove from Wichita to Haviland on Monday to lend help.

They were behind the wheel of a Northridge Friends Church van with a trailer hitched to the back of it.

"The van is loaded to the hilt with clothes, and so is the trailer," Dillon said.

The church's congregation responded quickly to a plea Sunday for clothing and sleeping bags for people displaced by the Greensburg tornado.

"We have everything from infant to adult," Dillon said.

As they pulled over in front of the makeshift American Red Cross shelter at Haviland High School, Carol Fast shouted out from her car: "Do you guys got a baby stroller?"

Fast, an employee of the Haviland school district, was trying to find one for a friend staying at the shelter. Her friend has a toddler and a baby and needed a stroller, stat.

The church hadn't brought one, but later, someone else found one.

Fast jumped up and down at the news.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**2 p.m. Monday**

Twenty-seven feral cats that were being transported from a farm in Syracuse to be spayed and neutered in Pratt before going to new homes were killed in the Greensburg tornado.

Ray Huff of Friends of Felines, a cat welfare group based in Sedgwick, said he was driving a truck and trailer carrying the cats Friday night when he encountered heavy rain and large hail.

"We pulled off the highway into Greensburg looking for a car wash or any business with a large overhang" where the cats would be protected from the weather, Huff said in an e-mail.

"About five minutes later a very powerful tornado struck Greensburg, and we were directly in its path."

The truck, trailer and all 27 cats were destroyed, Huff said.

The cats were part of a group of about 100 that had been living on a farm in Syracuse, in far western Kansas, and needed new homes after their owner had to move into assisted living.

Veterinarians in Pratt and Johnson had offered to spay and neuter the cats, vaccinate them and treat them for parasites before volunteers were to take them to new homes in Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico.

--Diane McCartney

**1:47 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- Pulling up to Haviland High School in their late-model, burgundy station wagon, Dena McClauskey and her husband, Mike Sinclair, said they just wanted to help.

The Pratt residents hauled in four cases of bottled water, four eight-packs of Gatorade, a six-pound bag of Friskies cat food and a 22-pound bag of Ol' Roy dog food to give to the Red Cross, which in turn will distribute the supplies to people who need them.

The couple is not associated with the Salvation Army or Red Cross or any other official volunteer group.

"Just humanitarians," Sinclair said.

Red Cross volunteers say there are many folks like them helping out.

McClauskey nodded solemnly when asked if the devastation makes her better appreciate when she has.

"I have plenty," she said.

Meanwhile, at Haviland Hardware and Convenience Groceries, an older man checking out at the cash register talks about losing his home. "Now don't cry," a woman urges him.

People trying to get in to Greensburg at this hour to collect belongings are having a hard time. An ammonia leak has hampered efforts, and those who've been into town say there's a five-mile line of cars backed up on the U.S. 54.

-- Deb Gruver

**1:25 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- The brass bell fastened to the front door of Haviland Hardware and Convenience Groceries rings constantly today as the door opens and shuts, opens and shuts.

People dart in and out, buying up snacks, bread, cold drinks, cleaning supplies.

Owner Vic Hannan doesn't want to admit it, but people are buying a lot of cigarettes, too. Stress, you know.

He asks people if they lost their homes, what they're going to do next.

"How are you holding up? You're unemployed now," he says to a visitor about 1:20 p.m. looking for a bottle of bleach.

-- Deb Gruver

**12:35 p.m. Monday**

HAVILAND -- It's hard to pick and choose what to take and what to leave behind. For adults, but especially for children. That's one reason why Jay and Amy Fleener left their 10-year-old son, Jaden, behind on their first trip back home to Greensburg on Monday morning.

They filled the back of a pickup truck with clothing and personal items, taking what they need to get through the next few weeks.

They had a stucco home in Greensburg, where Jay's family set up two businesses in 1907.

Ask Amy Fleener how long they've lived in Greensburg, and she is blank for a second and then says "Forever."

Their home is standing, but it's a loss. The funeral home they operate also took a hit.

The Fleeners survived Friday's tornado by hiding under a pool table in their basement.

Amy Fleener said she understands why they couldn't get back into their home until today.

"We weren't terribly frustrated, just waiting," she said.

The family -- Jay, Amy, Jaden and 15-year-old Taylor -- have been "farmed out" with friends since the tornado Friday night.

Now they're going to make their home in Haviland, where they've found a rental house.

It'll do for now, she says.

Emergency workers marked the truck's windshield with their address. That marking gives them access in and out of Greensburg. They can return for as many loads of belongings as they want until 6 p.m., she said.

They stopped in to Haviland Hardware and Convenience Groceries for supplies.

Owner Vic Hannan and his staff are making sure everyone who purchases something keeps a receipt to get reimbursed later for food and toiletries.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**11:30 a.m. Monday**

Scenes from Greensburg this morning, as police allow residents to search their homes:

Everywhere one looks, people are hugging, or staring, or taking pictures of their homes, or loading pickups already heaped with belongings. Piles of rubble can be seen along streets, shoved out of the way so rescuers can drive trucks and equipment through town.

Other people stand on upper floors, looking at vacant spaces where walls and roofs once kept them warm. People bend to pick up small belongings. Many of these people wear gloves, a smart move considering all the splinters, broken glass and nails sticking out everywhere.

It is slippery underfoot. The rusted nails and broken boards and the pieces of belongings are all wet.

--Tim Potter

**5:15 p.m. Sunday**

The gym of Haviland High School was a place where men cried Sunday.

Kansas House Minority Leader Dennis McKinney choked back tears as he said, "It sure is good to see all of you" at Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' side.

Sebelius extended her arm. Rep. Jerry Moran placed his hand on McKinney's shoulder.

McKinney lost his home Friday night in the tornado and went door to door to make sure neighbors were OK. He pulled a woman and her 9-month-old baby out of the rubble of their basementless home.

Sebelius reassured people gathered at the makeshift shelter that help will be available for them.

"I know there's a lot of frustration that you can't get back in" to your homes, the governor said.

Safety, though, is the main concern, she stressed.

There's too much debris.

Residents will be allowed back in to Greensburg starting at 8 a.m. Monday. Buses will be available on the hour to transport people, Sebelius said.

"Let me just tell you I know Kansans are resilient," Sebelius said.

Many people in Kansas make their livings and lose their livings with Mother Nature, she said.

"This is a pretty harsh blow dealt by Mother Nature," she said. "She wasn't very kind to this area."

She and McKinney urged people to keep receipts -- for toiletries, food, hotels, clothing.

President Bush's signing of the federal disaster declaration will provide upfront assistance for people.

"We have FEMA's attention," Moran said. "They are paying attention to Greensburg. The federal government is in a position to help Greensburg as a community and individuals create a new future."

Sebelius said National Guard troops will be available to help rebuild.

That's what they do, she said.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**5:10 p.m. Sunday**

The Wichita Wranglers game Sunday was postponed by the stormy weather, which gave the players plenty of time to sit around and discuss the tornado in Greensburg.

Wranglers infielder Mike Gaffney said that about five groups of players gathered in the clubhouse or talked outside about the devastation in Greensburg and what they could do.

"With all the storms going on, we were watching The Weather Channel, but until we saw the pictures in (Sunday's) paper, that's when we saw how bad it was. We just figured that we all wanted to help," Gaffney said. "There's really nothing we could do because we play every day, so we're putting some money together... to get water and supplies that Greensburg would need."

Then designated hitter Craig Brazell took charge and started collecting money.

"Guys were chipping in \$10, \$20 each," Gaffney said.

Wranglers co-general manager Josh Robertson said the front office would meet today about coming up with a fund of its own.

-- **Joanna Chadwick**

### **5 p.m. Sunday**

When the storm hit, Shanda Halling was in the next town over, visiting friends. The Greensburg High School sophomore got a text message from her sister saying the tornado sirens had started. She drove home on back roads, anxious to find her mother, who'd been alone in the house. As she made her way to the wrecked Dillons grocery store where Greensburg residents had gathered, she took in the aftermath:

"There's nothing left of the grade school, mostly, and at the high school it's caved in, the roofs and everything....I went by the rodeo grounds and there's practically nothing left," Shanda recalled Sunday while she waited for her mother to fill out FEMA paperwork at the temporary shelter in nearby Haviland.

They were lucky, said Shanda, a round-faced 16-year-old with blond highlights in her black hair. Her sister and brother-in-law have a house in Pratt where she and her mother can stay. They won't have to spend the night on a Red Cross cot.

"I miss the school already," she said. She was learning to program Web pages in her computer science class, and she'd just finished making an oak coffee table in shop class.

"It had diagonal corners," she said, holding her hands at an angle to demonstrate. "But I'm sure it didn't make it."

Other belongings that may not have survived: Her TV, CD player, bedroom set, photo collection, and the family car.

"It's pretty hard," she said. "But as long as I have my family, I know that's what I need now."

Later, in the shelter's cafeteria, Shanda stopped to hug a friend.

"Are you OK?" she asked.

Detailing what had happened to her house, the girl had a simple response: "It's completely gone."

-- Jillian Cohan

**4:45 p.m. Sunday**

I almost made it through the first 24 hours after a storm without sobbing.

Almost.

Greensburg is one of my favorite small Kansas towns. And now a tornado has practically smashed it out of existence. Joining a media tour through the devastation, I walked past the decimated Dillons store, the gas stations, the Kansan Inn and the bludgeoned courthouse. I gasped at the remains of the high school, city hall and the churches. There were a few hastily stifled tears at the site of the elderly people in shelters, holding tight to a beloved dog or cat.

But when I saw what happened to the Big Well, I cried.

OK, I know the "World's Largest Hand-Dug Well" is one of those cheesy, hokey Kansas things that everybody always laughs about.

But I love that well.

I discovered it on one of my first "getting acquainted" weekend jaunts the first year I moved to Kansas. Half fascinated, half terrified, my daughters and I climbed to the bottom and back to the top. When their friends came to visit from Minnesota and North Carolina, I could count on a visit to the well to create a great memory of Kansas.

On annual Wheat Quality Tours, somebody always stopped at Greensburg and everybody piled out of the cars and into the gift shop, past the meteorite collection. They bought a ticket and climbed down the stairs to the chilly

depths of the well. On my last such trip in 2006, I did too. I thought I'd never make it back to the top. But I did.

I've always thought of the well as kind of a monument to the persistence, maybe even the downright stubborn streak, that runs down the backbone of Kansas. The railroad needed water and by golly, Greensburg built them a well they had to respect. With shovels and pickaxes and ropes and buckets, they built it.

Without electricity or gasoline engines or powered anything they dug a circular hole 109 feet deep and 32 feet in diameter and cased it in native stone hewn from the banks of the Medicine River 12 miles away.

With the same stubborn persistence that allowed them to move back to the old dugout when a prairie fire took the house or survive on root vegetables and beans when the drought took most everything else, they built it. You couldn't stand at the bottom of that well and not be impressed by the accomplishment.

I've always felt proud to be a descendant of that kind of folks, even if I am a transplant from the land east of the state line.

On Saturday, the gift shop that covered the well was rubble. The meteorites are missing. The BIG WELL sign you could see from the highway lay crumpled on its side. The guard rail around the top of the well was bent and twisted. Since the storm, nobody has tried to take a look down the well yet. There's too much really important, life-saving stuff to be done.

I believe that some big sheet of something, maybe a wall of the building covered it snugly and everything else fell on top. And when all the debris is cleared away the well will be fine. I refuse to think it's been bludgeoned and beaten, so damaged it can't go on.

Maybe I need to believe the well survived because then I can believe that Greensburg will survive, too. After all, the folks who lived there are the progeny of the farmers and cowboys and shopowners who dug and dug and sawed and hauled rock until the job was done. They're made of pretty sturdy stuff, those kids of the pioneers.

Tornadoes, like wildfires and drought and hordes of grasshoppers, are part of life in Kansas. When you get hit, you begin by picking up the pieces. Your family and friends and neighbors come and help. In these more sophisticated times, your state and federal government comes too. You recover and rebuild.

It'll take time. And persistence. And stubbornness. But I think we'll see Greensburg rise from the rubble. Just like I think that one of these years, I'll be able to take my grandkids to climb down the well.

-- **Phyllis Jacobs Griekspoor**

**3 p.m. Sunday**

In a strange juxtaposition, a full set of white and blue china -- including tea service -- stands on display in a storefront on Haviland's main street, perfect, while Greensburg residents' dishes are strewn across their town.

People stop to hug in front of the hardware store, relieved to see one another.

"I'm so glad you're OK" is a familiar refrain as people visit the Salvation Army's makeshift disaster office at Haviland's small, brick city hall.

Displaced residents and weary travelers stop in the hardware store-turned feed station for loaves of bread, two-liters of Pepsi, coffee and chips.

The cash register rings constantly on a day that the hardware store is usually closed.

--**Deb Gruver**

**2:45 p.m. Sunday**

In a grove of trees just past the Pratt County line on U.S. 54, a blue banner assures drivers, "Greensburg has a great big welcome for you!"

The town once did, but Sunday afternoon Ed Frost wondered what would become of his home. Sitting on a bench outside the Red Cross' temporary command post at Haviland High School, Frost, a mental health counselor in

his 50s, considered his new role as a tornado survivor. He and his family wouldn't be allowed back to their house until search-and-rescue crews accounted for 31 Greensburg residents who were still missing, Frost said.

"When it's your hometown, to have a bunch of strangers come in and say, 'You need to leave; we're in charge now' ... it's not a comfortable situation," he said. "I don't have any answers for it," he added. "It's just being in the dark that's hard."

Frost and his wife, Marquita, weathered the storm by wedging themselves between the furnace and the refrigerator in their basement. When neighbors helped free the couple from the rubble of their house at 313 S. Bay St., they saw clouds of dust and what remained of their living room, minus the north wall. "I had a big bass violin that I keep near the door," Frost said. "It was standing up like nothing had happened."

In a soft, soothing baritone, Frost said he hopes his mentally ill clients from the Iroquois Center for Human Development will prove as resilient. Some of them would be homeless if it weren't for the center, he said. When he sees a familiar face in the crowd at the shelter, he says a silent prayer of thanks.

"We lost a couple," he said, turning away to wipe his tears.

A few minutes later, he composes himself: "He giveth and he taketh away. We're on that side of it now, but we'll come out. And it's going to be better than it was before, because we'll be closer."

-- Jillian Cohan

**2:40 p.m. Sunday**

If you have faith, you pray. You believe. But what if you aren't a person of faith? We asked someone for advice.

The Rev. Gene McIntosh, pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Greensburg, suggests just being together. Hugging. Holding. Hanging on.

"I believe God works through people," he said shortly after returning to his church to survey the damage.

The sanctuary roof was caved in. A few rooms in the southeast part of the church were intact. A picture of Jesus remained on a wall, though a cross atop the church had toppled.

People need to come together now -- no matter what their beliefs, McIntosh said.

-- Deb Gruver

**1:40 p.m. Sunday**

Greensburg school officials have begun updating the school district's Web site.

Anyone seeking updates about the status of school activities is urged to visit [www.usd422.org](http://www.usd422.org). Information will be posted as it becomes available, superintendent Darin Headrick said.

--Deb Gruver

**1:10 p.m. Sunday**

People are trickling in at Haviland Hardware, grabbing snacks. Newspapers with front-page photographs of the tornado are strewn on a round white table.

The owner asks each person where they're from.

He jokes about it being a non-profit store.

A microwave heats up frozen burritos and cheeseburgers.

-- Deb Gruver

**12:55 p.m. Sunday**

The National Weather Service has determined that the Greensburg tornado was an EF-5.

"EF" stands for "Enhanced Fujita," the scale meteorologists now use to measure the destructive power of a tornado. An "EF-5" tornado is in the most destructive category.

It means the winds in the Greensburg tornado are now estimated to have been at least 200 mph.

Dan McCarthy, a meteorologist with National Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla., said the Greensburg tornado was as strong as or stronger than the massive tornado that struck central Oklahoma in 1999.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**12:30 p.m. Sunday**

There will be no formal classes the rest of the school year in Greensburg. There were three weeks left. High school graduation was supposed to be next Saturday.

"We're going to have graduation," school superintendent Darin Headrick said, "but when and where we don't know."

In August, though, there will be school, he said. Probably in portable buildings and in neighboring towns.

The school district plans to rebuild.

"It will be a huge challenge, but also an opportunity," Headrick said. The old schools -- a grade school and a high school, destroyed in the storm -- were built in the early 1900s, and retrofitting for electricity and air-conditioning has been a challenge.

Now, new schools can be built from scratch.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**9:30 a.m. Sunday**

Bulldozers have begun to level unstable structures around Greensburg. Crews are spray-painting street names on the asphalt so people know where they are.

It's hard to describe what it's like here, but in a weird way it reminds me of El Dorado Lake. Flat and featureless -- except for the bare and twisted treetops that rise above everything.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**9:15 a.m. Sunday**

The clouds have returned over Greensburg, and it has begun to rain.

Crews have begun spray-painting a fluorescent orange "V" on vacant houses.

Officially, the death toll remains at nine.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**8:30 a.m. Sunday**

Politicians spoke on national morning news shows from Greensburg on this morning, reassuring help for those whose lives were torn apart by a tornado that hit town Friday night.

Hotels in the area were packed Saturday night. Front-desk clerks at Pratt hotels told the same line to hundreds of people looking for a place to stay: "Without a reservation, no vacancy."

Water stood in fields this morning, the skies clearing.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius will be in Greensburg today.

The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services' office in Pratt will be taking applications Monday for people who need emergency food stamps.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**8:02 p.m. Saturday**

Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Hospital, on South Washington, volunteered Saturday to take up to eight pets critically injured in the Greensburg tornado.

As of Saturday evening, none had arrived.

-- Dan Voorhis

**7:35 p.m. Saturday**

About 200 people are expected to stay in shelters in the Greensburg area tonight, half the number that did Saturday morning, as people find other places to stay, according to the American Red Cross Midway-Kansas Chapter.

-- Dan Voorhis

**7:23 p.m. Saturday**

A tornado touched down briefly twice near Haviland about 7:15 p.m., driving reporters' vehicles on U.S. 54 toward the ditch.

Haviland, 12 miles east of Greensburg, is where hundreds of displaced residents have taken shelter since Friday night.

-- L. Kelly

**7:05 p.m. Saturday**

As of Saturday evening, hospitals in western and central Kansas were caring for at least 24 people injured by the tornado or transferred from the hospital in Greensburg.

Pratt Medical Center, 30 miles east of Greensburg, was hit the hardest. The emergency room saw 78 people, most with broken bones or lacerations, said hospital spokeswoman Kim Stivers.

"From about 12:30 until 6 this morning it was very, very, very, very busy and we just kept on getting more patients," Stivers said. "But we managed."

Nine people are still there, with two in the intensive care unit.

Western Plains Medical Center in Dodge City saw 13 people, one who died on the way to the hospital. It still is caring for two.

Hutchinson Hospital had four patients, all in good condition.

Via Christi-St. Francis has five, with two in critical condition.

Wesley Medical Center had four, with two in critical condition.

-- **Dan Voorhis**

**6:30 p.m. Saturday**

The streets of Greensburg may look clear in photographs, but they are strewn with little bits of flotsam of a town ripped to shreds: nails, glass and metal.

The guys at Greensburg Tires "are going to be working around the clock," said manager Jimmy Brozek.

They are getting help tonight from countless folks like Luis Moreno, who left his shop in Dodge City to help repair tires and keep backhoes, semitrucks and patrol cars rolling.

-- **Deb Gruver**

**6 p.m. Saturday**

The official death toll in the Greensburg tornado remains at nine.

Sharon Watson, director of public affairs for the Kansas Adjutant General's office, said dozens of people have been injured.

"We have reports from local hospitals indicating there are about 16 critically injured and another 50 that were being treated at area hospitals," Watson said. "But the numbers continue to charge."

Watson said 40 National Guardsmen from Wichita and Great Bend are in Greensburg today providing security. They will help enforce an 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. curfew that will see a temporary suspension of rescue operations.

Sedgwick County search and rescue crews are in the area, and they helped evacuate about 30 people from Greensburg Hospital, which was heavily damaged by the tornado.

The National Guard also was supplying the city with water. The town's water tower was destroyed, Watson said, and city officials were afraid the water supply was compromised.

-- **Hurst Laviana**

**5:40 p.m. Saturday**

Ellen Querner and a small group of pet lovers called PALS are in Greensburg rescuing dogs found wandering through the devastation searching for their owners and their homes.

By late afternoon, they had about 30 dogs in a temporary shelter in a Greensburg maintenance building.

Residents searching for a pet should call the Pratt Humane Society at 620-672-6777 with a name, contact number and a description of the pet.

"We want the owners to come get them as quickly as possible," she said.

As for cats, they are still traumatized and still in hiding, Querner said.

"We won't see the cats for a while," she said. "They have a tendency to hide and won't come out again until night."

She said they might start setting traps for the cats tonight.

-- **Dan Voorhis**

**5:08 p.m. Saturday**

Most of the 26 residents of the Carriage House Assisted Living Center in Greensburg are now safe in sister facilities in the Wichita area after riding out the tornado.

There was only one injury, said owner Larry Wilkerson, when a residents fell and broke his wrist. He was taken to the hospital this morning.

The residents and staff rode out the storm in the basement and the hallways. The building sustained only minor damage, mostly broken glass -- one of the few in town left standing.

"It was a miracle, I mean 'Do you believe in miracles?'" said Annie Lovette, operator of Lakepoint Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at 13th and West streets in Wichita.

Nine residents were taken to Lakepoint at Crestview. Seven went to the Carriage House in Augusta and two went to the Lakepoint Nursing Center in El Dorado. These are all sisters facilities to the Greensburg facility.

There rest went with family, Wilkerson said.

-- Dan Voorhis

**5 p.m. Saturday**

Julie Harshey lived in the Comodaro Apartments in Greensburg.

She wasn't able to make it to the basement shelter in time.

She remembers hanging onto the doorknob and feeling her feet being lifted off the floor. She heard all of her dishes flying out of the cupboards, windows breaking, doors popping open.

Harshey found all of her neighbors but one and she can't find her cat, Bootsie.

She was taken to the emergency room in Pratt for a head wound; she was hit by a flying timber.

She was also wearing a patch over her eye because she was hit by flying glass. She was wrapped in a blanket and clothed only in a hospital gown.

--Phyllis Jacobs Griekspoor

#### **4:30 p.m. Saturday**

Sen. Pat Roberts and Reps. Todd Tiahrt and Jerry Moran, visited three shelters set up in Haviland to reassure the victims that federal help was on the way.

"This will be no Katrina," Roberts told one of the groups.

Sen. Sam Brownback, who is scheduled to arrive in the area on Sunday, joined Roberts, Tiahrt and Moran today in sending an official request for national disaster assistance to President Bush.

-- **Phyllis Jacobs Griekspoor**

#### **4:30 p.m. Saturday**

Agents from State Farm, American Family and Farmers Group insurance agencies were in the area on Saturday and began distributing checks.

"We're just trying to meet people's immediate needs and restore some sense of normalcy," said Bob Wiederstein, a Farmers Group adjuster from Valley Center.

National damage assessment teams were scheduled to start arriving tonight and could begin damage assessment as early as Sunday if officials say it's safe enough to enter the area.

-- **Phyllis Jacobs Griekspoor**

#### **3:30 p.m. Saturday**

Virginia Hammond of Greensburg stood in the street Saturday afternoon and looked at a gaping hole that once held a large curtained bedroom window.

"I just washed those curtains the day before yesterday," she said.

During the storm, Hammond said, she and her husband huddled on their basement floor with their grandson.

"You could feel the dust and dirt," she said. "The noise was just atrocious."

Although they lost most of their possessions, she said, "right now that doesn't mean anything."

"My family's safe. As long as you've got your family, that's everything."

-- **Tim Potter**

**1 p.m. Saturday**

Marjorie McKinney, who lives with her husband on a farm near Lewis, works at the Iroquois Transitional Living Center in Greensburg.

Iroquois is a home for severely and persistently mentally ill people who are stable on medication and attempting to gain skills to return to mainstream life.

Residents took shelter in the basement, but the house was badly damaged, and they weren't able to locate their medication before they left.

McKinney and one other supervisor are with their clients now at the high school shelter in Haviland, where they have been since about 1 a.m.

Supervisors are trying to bring in necessary medications for people.

McKinney said some people have been picked up by family members and they are attempting to make arrangements for others.

--**Phyllis Jacobs Griekspoor**

**7 p.m. Saturday**

In Stafford County, longtime Macskville banker Don Peterson said he had counted six homes that were destroyed by the tornado, and that a half-mile tree line south of town was uprooted. "It's gone, hauled off with the storm," he said.

He counted 25 dead Angus steers, he said.

He said Mayor-elect Mike Benzel had told him that it would take Midwest Energy, the area's power supplier, three to four days to restore power to

the town. In the meantime, the town is using a generator to run the sewer and water systems.

-- Beccy Tanner