

## Twister destroys rural Erie home

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ERIE - One rural Erie home was demolished and a few others received minor damage from a tornado that touched down Sunday afternoon northeast of Erie on Rooks Road.

A modular home near 150th and Rooks belonging to Tom C. and Melva Hudson was destroyed. The couple had evacuated the home before the tornado after receiving a call from their daughter, Susan Morris of Parsons, who warned them to seek shelter in the Neosho County Courthouse in Erie.

Neosho County Sheriff Jim Keath reported that the National Weather Service had issued a tornado warning for the county at 3 p.m. and the storm warning system was activated. The warning lapsed, but another warning came at about 3:40 p.m.

Sheriff's deputies and storm spotters took positions throughout the county. At about 4 p.m. deputies and storm spotters reported rotation in clouds south of Erie. Within minutes, a sheriff's deputy reported a funnel had touched down at about 150th and Rooks Road.

"That's about a mile north and a mile east of Erie," Keath said. "The tornado took a path down 150th and Rooks in a northeasterly direction."

The Hudsons had only been at the courthouse about 10 minutes when they received word their house had been demolished, their daughter-in-law Carol Hudson said this morning.

When the family arrived at their home, a number of law enforcement officers and other emergency workers were there.

"Sheriff's officers gridded off the affected area along the path to check for injuries and account for residents," Keath said. "And there was a considerable amount of traffic from people coming to look, so officers did shut down the road to allow in only those who were helping and emergency personnel."

Help arrived en masse, too, Carol Hudson said.

"I think they had more help than they knew what to do with," said Neosho County Emergency Management Director Max Gough.

"It was wonderful how many people came with trucks and trailers to help," Carol Hudson said.

Mr. and Mrs. Hudson moved into the home in 1978, but had just recently completed a remodel of their kitchen and bathroom. The tornado ripped the roof from their home and an outside wall containing the new kitchen cabinets was laid flat on the ground.

With nighttime fast approaching, and everything in their home exposed, Carol Hudson said her parents were extremely grateful as friends arrived from Erie and St. Paul to help remove many of their belongings.

While the home is destroyed, she said it was incredible how much inside it may be saved, such as dressers, front room furniture, stove, refrigerator, freezer and maybe even the computer.

"We're not sure, we haven't had time to check everything, but a lot of it appears undamaged," she said.

Erie resident Chuck Wilson offered use of his building for the Hudsons to store their belongings until they decided what to do.

"They are staying with us for now," Carol Hudson said. "They have insurance and they have several options to choose from for short term or long term."

The tornado did minor damage to other homes, outbuildings, fences and flipped a few tractors and combines, but Keath said there was no other serious damage to property such as the Hudsons suffered.

About 2 1/2 miles north of the Hudsons' home, Phyllis Coover had taken shelter in her basement after hearing the tornado had touched down on Rooks Road.

"Rooks Road is where I live," she said. "I have a little bitty window in my basement and I could see the tornado coming, but then I got away from the glass. About a quarter mile or half mile from my house it raised up and went over the hill."

The tornado touched down again following a northeasterly path, leaving Neosho County near Savonburg in Allen County, Keath said.

Coover said she was saddened by the Hudsons' loss, but said, "It could have been so much worse."

Keath agreed, and attributed the fact there were no injuries to early warnings from the National Weather Service, excellent reporting by storm spotters and officers in the area and early activation of a warning system that allowed residents to seek shelter.

"We were very fortunate again," Keath said.

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**<http://www.parsonssun.com/news/articles/tornado112805.html>**