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Photos by Lourdine Florek

Richard Strawser of 416 N. Eighth Ave., cleans debris from his yard following Sunday's storm. High winds caused major damage to Strawser's home and leveled his garage.

Residents begin clean up from Sunday storm

Chain saws, buzzing like angry mosquitoes, could be heard throughout Hoopeston Monday as residents began cleaning up from Sunday afternoon's severe storm.

Richard Strawser of 416 N. Eighth Ave., was one of those cleaning debris from his yard. The storm, which hit at about 4 p.m., caused major structural and water damage to Strawser's home and leveled a garage containing go-carts, lawn mowers and bicycles. Despite his

loss, Strawser was upbeat Monday morning. "Things happen," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Things can be replaced."

Strawser was not the only one in what is known as Greater Hoopeston to feel the force of Mother Nature. Gary and Terry Bell's home at 522 Ninth Ave., also received major damage.

See STORM on other side

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Storm continued from other side

The storm's fury was not relegated solely to the city's northwest side. Three factories—Silgan Containers, FMC and Hoopeston Foods, received major damage.

Walls from the Hoopeston Foods warehouse at Lincoln and First Ave., were blown away, exposing a glistening new wall of bright-stacked cans while the FMC parking lot on Market looked more like a gigantic tin heap. Following Sunday's deluge, a waterfall cascaded from the roof of Silgan Containers and the force of the wind blew bricks into Main St.

Residential areas closer to the heart of the city were not spared, either as many spent several hours without power. Kelli Underwood, who lives near the Hoopeston Foods warehouse, held her children and expressed her thankfulness that the only damage her home sustained was tree limbs in the yard. "It could've been a lot worse," she said.

In the storm's aftermath, residents commiserated with each other while others whose property went unscathed traveled the streets to view the damage. Residents from neighboring towns flooded Hoopeston nearly as profusely as the rains to observe the devastation.

An early count showed 40 homes received major damage and another 70 were slightly or moderately damaged, said Mayor Chalmers Flint.

Flint, who was out of town for the weekend, returned at 5:30 p.m. to find city crews cleaning up and directing traffic.



Sunday night, as on- and off-duty police rerouted traffic, city workers and others with end loaders, as well as state road trucks with snowplows reinstalled, traversed the streets moving debris from the roads. Crews cleaned until nearly midnight, Flint said.

Weather officials are still de-



bating whether the storm was a tornado or straight line winds. Earl Drollinger, head of the Hoopeston Emergency Services and Disaster Agency, believes the storm was a tornado.

Drollinger said he learned of the approaching storm at about 3:15 p.m. He and assistant ESDA coordinator Rod Drollinger, took positions on the outskirts of the city to keep their eyes on the skies. Rod Drollinger, who was west of Hoopeston on Thompson, reported his van began "jumping up and down" and that winds appeared to be 80 to 90 miles per hour, Earl Drollinger said. The men decided to return to the city. "We came back to town and found this mess," he said.

Quickly after the storm passed, Drollinger began looking for volunteers to help. Rossville, Georgetown, Wellington and Rankin sent men and equipment and the

In the Hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital July 5

Admitted: Leo Strain, Glenn Umbanhowar, William Bloyd, Hoopeston.

Discharged: none.

July 6

Admitted: Mary Jones, Betty Rhodes, Hoopeston.

Discharged: Leo Strain, William Bloyd, Ethel Phillips.

July 7

Admitted: Bernice Hofbauer, Cissna Park; Patricia Boyer, Hoopeston

Discharged: Glenn Umbanhowar.

July 8

Nothing to report.



Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Illinois Department of Transportation also pitched in. In all, about 125 people volunteered between Sunday night and Monday, Drollinger said. Assistance is expected to continue Tuesday when members of Lincoln's Challenge and Department of Corrections work crews come to the city.

The downside is volunteers will only clean municipal property. "They don't want to take away from people who do that for a living, Drollinger said

Working in Monday's hot, humid conditions was unpleasant but volunteers were treated to noontime food and drinks at the Hoopeston Multi Agency.

As Hoopeston continues to clean up, some questions remain unanswered, at least for now. An estimate of damage caused by the storm won't be available for 30 to 90 days, Flint said.

Whether damage was enough for Hoopeston to be

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 88. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 65. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High 85, low 65.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopeston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

Silgan Containers is a watershed, washing bricks into Main St. after Sunday's storm (bottom left). Gary and Teri Bell's home (center) suffers extensive damage during the storm. Right, the top of a power pole is caught in the lines once supported along Thompson Ave. while other poles block the street behind it.

declared a disaster area is another unknown. Drollinger, who is coordinating that effort, said paperwork will be arriving shortly that, when completed, will determine whether Hoopeston residents will be eligible for assistance. "I don't think we'll qualify for federal but maybe for the state," Drollinger said.

Flint said Rep. Bill Black (R-Danville) had called Monday morning to offer his assistance.

Another question is whether factories hit by the storm will rebuild or close their doors and whether Hoopeston can do anything to entice them to stay. "I don't know what we're going to do," he said.

What is known, Drollinger said, is that Hoopeston needs more ESDA volunteers. "We need more help out here," he said.

Anyone interested in becoming an ESDA volunteer may call Drollinger at 283-7987, Rod Drollinger at 283-7325 or the Hoopeston Police Department, 283-5196.

More pictures of the storm are available at www.justthefacts.tm.

Classifieds

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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