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Storms rake Garland County

DAN MARSH
The Sentinel-Record

A line of thunderstorms that produced possible tornadoes Thursday afternoon damaged numerous structures and downed trees in western Garland County.

Funnel clouds were reported by several sources around 3:30 p.m. Thursday, but no injuries were reported by the Garland County Sheriff's Department.

One area of damage, Nubbin Ridge Road at the intersection of Ballard Road, was just west of an area that was struck by a tornado in April 2011.

At 3:51 p.m., National Weather Service Doppler radar indicated a severe thunderstorm capable of producing a tornado located 10 miles south of Lake Ouachita, moving northeast at 30 mph.

At 5:10 p.m., Garland County was placed under a flash flood warning until 8 p.m. due to heavy rainfall from numerous systems moving through the county, and reports of 1 to 3 inches of rain in a two-hour period.

By 6 p.m., Entergy Arkansas Inc.'s website was reporting 3,274 outages as a result of the initial round of storms that moved through Garland County.

Entergy posted the following statement about the damage:

"Due to the thunderstorms along with the high winds that have and continue to move through the area we are experiencing numerous outages. Entergy personnel are working to restore service as quickly as safely possible. At this time, we estimate that all service will be restored by May 30 at 11 p.m. The estimated time of restoration could change as all damage assessments are completed or if other storm activity results

STORMS, PAGE 5A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

PICKING UP THE PIECES: Family and friends sift through the remains of a home on Nubbin Ridge Road just west of Ballard Road, located off Old Dallas Road, on Thursday.

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

STORM DAMAGE: Firefighters with 70 West Fire Department cut a tree out of the roadway on Ballard Road, located off Old Dallas Road, after severe storms ripped through the area on Thursday afternoon.

Local schools shelter students, community

JAY BELL
The Sentinel-Record

The Lake Hamilton and Jessieville school districts took action to shelter students, faculty, staff and others in the community during the storms that hit Garland County on Thursday.

A tornado warning reached Pearcy first in southwest Garland County. Students began boarding school buses at 3:05 p.m., but district officials received notification of a tornado warning soon after and immediately decided to remove students from the buses.

Superintendent Steve Anderson said LHSD Commissioned Security Officer Robert Sorenson and Director of Support Services Jeff Britt monitored the situation with him.

"Mr. Sorenson and Mr. Britt handled the situation very well," Anderson said.

Anderson said some parents picked up their children and some others joined school faculty and students in safe areas, but he said there was not a rush of parents at the schools.

Students and faculty at Lake Hamilton Primary School took shelter in the district's only safe building. Students at the district's other schools were taken to their safest locations.

Anderson said all actions taken were for precautionary reasons. He reported that the area around the schools saw rain and lightning, but no high winds or tornado activity.

SCHOOLS, PAGE 5A

Tornadoes touch down in Okla., Ark.

SEAN MURPHY
The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — At least two tornadoes touched down in Oklahoma and another hit Arkansas on Thursday as a powerful storm system moved through the middle of the country. At least nine injuries were reported.

The National Weather Service reported two tornadoes on the ground near Perkins and Ripley in north central Oklahoma and another west of Oden, Ark.

Seven people were injured in tornadoes in Arkansas. Two other injuries were attributed to lightning strikes in that state. Lightning was also believed to have started a fire at a residential complex in northwestern Indiana.

Arkansas Emergency Management spokesman Tommy Jackson said first responders were having trouble reaching

TORNADOES, PAGE 5A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

AFTERMATH: Emergency personnel work near the scene of storm damage on Nubbin Ridge Road at the intersection of Ballard Road, located off Old Dallas Road, on Thursday.

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Weather

MOSTLY SUNNY. HIGHS IN THE MID 80S. LOWS IN THE MID 70S.

SUNRISE: 6:01 A.M.
SUNSET: 8:19 P.M.

MORE ON PAGE 2A

SATURDAY: HIGH 84° LOW 64°

SUNDAY: HIGH 81° LOW 60°

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