

One person killed when tornadoes hit Oklahoma, Arkansas (Update)

March 25 2015, by Justin Juozapavicius



Medics load a man into an ambulance after a round of severe weather hit a trailer park near 145th West Avenue and West 17th Street in Sand Springs, Okla., Wednesday, March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Matt Barnard)

The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a violent end Wednesday, when tornadoes raked Tulsa during its evening rush hour,

killing one person and injuring others.

Tulsa County Sheriff's Capt. Billy McKelvey said one person was killed in a mobile home park near suburban Sand Springs that was nearly destroyed Wednesday amid severe weather. It wasn't yet clear whether it was a tornado or straight-line winds that hit the park, which McKelvey said could accommodate 40 to 50 trailers. McKelvey said he believed at least 15 people were hurt, but he did not have an exact number yet.

"It could have been much worse," he said.

Tornadoes were seen elsewhere in Oklahoma, as well as in Arkansas, but no injuries were reported from those.

A small tornado swept across parts of Moore, an Oklahoma City suburb where 24 people died in a top-of-the-scale EF5 tornado in 2013. Other twisters formed along a line from southwest of Oklahoma City to east of Tulsa, and some touched down in the Ozark Mountains of northwestern Arkansas.

Until Tuesday, when a waterspout formed over an Arkansas lake, the U.S. hadn't had a tornado in more than a month.

Television video Wednesday evening showed roof damage in a Moore neighborhood—the Moore storm two years ago scraped lots to their foundations. A glass door at the Tulsa building that houses the National Weather Service office was smashed, and several cars in the parking lot lost their windows.

Don Ruffin said he and a neighbor were at a convenience store in far southeast Moore when he saw the tornado approaching.



This frame taken from video provided by Brenton Leete shows a funnel cloud in part of a storm Wednesday, March 25, 2015, in Sand Springs, Okla. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Brenton Leete)

"I don't know how close it was to us, but it looked like it was coming toward us, and so we didn't take any chances," Ruffin said. "We got in our vehicles, ran home and got in our shelters."

Ruffin said after the storm passed, there were some fences knocked down and "patio furniture thrown everywhere."

The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management said statewide, nearly 80,000 power outages were reported. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol said an overturned tractor-trailer had snarled traffic on Interstate 35, a major north-south route.

"Those troopers are working their guts out there right now," Lt. John Vincent said.

The tornado season usually ramps up for parts of the U.S. in March, but weather patterns funneled cold air into much of the country, depriving the atmosphere of the warm, moist air necessary to form bad storms for most of the month.



First responders work to free a man from a rubble pile after a round of severe weather hit a trailer park near 145th West Avenue and West 17th Street in Sand Springs, Okla., on Wednesday, March 25, 2015. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Matt Barnard)

That all changed this week. Southerly winds pushed temperatures into the 70s and 80s across the Ozarks and Southern Plains, while weather fronts churned the air into Wednesday's storms.

Meteorologist Jeff Hood in Little Rock said a weak waterspout tornado

briefly touched down in Bull Shoals Lake in Marion County in northwest Arkansas on Tuesday night. He said it will likely be classified an EF0—the weakest tornado with wind speeds of 65 to 85 mph. A waterspout forms over water. The tornado never made it onto land, and there were no reports of damage.



Storm clouds gather over downtown Tulsa, Okla., Wednesday March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma, including one that raked Tulsa and its suburbs during the evening rush hour. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Christopher Smith)

"This will be the 'tornado' that breaks the drought for March," Greg Carbin, warning coordination meteorologist for the Storm Prediction Center, said before Wednesday's storms hit.

Before this week, only about two-dozen twisters had been recorded this

year during a period when about 120 are typical. The last time the U.S. had no twisters in March was nearly 50 years ago, according to figures from the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.



Debris litters the area after a storm swept through the area and damaged homes in Sand Springs, Okla. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Matt Barnard)



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First responders work to free a man from a pile of rubble after a round of severe weather hit a trailer park near 145th West Avenue and West 17th Street in Sand Springs, Okla., Wednesday, March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Matt Barnard)



Lightning flashes as a utility crew works on a power line on East 15th Street just west of Sheridan, Okla., Wednesday, March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Mike Simons)



People survey storm damage in Sand Springs, Okla., Wednesday, March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Joey Johnson)



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A man runs to his car after a roof fell on to it near First and Greenwood in Tulsa, Okla., Wednesday March 25, 2015. The slow start to the nation's tornado season came to a blustery end Wednesday when tornadoes hit Arkansas and Oklahoma, including one that raked Tulsa and its suburbs during the evening rush hour. (AP Photo/Tulsa World, Tom Gilbert)

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