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Cleaning up after the storm



SCOTT MCGREGOR | GRASSLANDS NEWS

Arena damaged

A severe storm last Friday night caused extensive damage to communities such as Grenfell where winds peeled roofing off the arena (above) as well as tore siding off the Paterson elevator (below) and collapsed a grain bin at the Viterra facility. The storm knocked out power to close to 10,000 customers, some of which didn't have it restored until Monday afternoon.

Grenfell area receives the brunt of wicked July 15 thunderstorm

By Sarah Pacio
and Elaine Ashfield
Grasslands News

A major storm hit southern Saskatchewan last Friday night (July 15), causing extended power outages and severe property damage in communities from Wolseley to Whitewood and communities further east and to the north. SaskAlert also issued tornado warnings across the province that included Whitewood at approximately 11:30 p.m. on Friday.

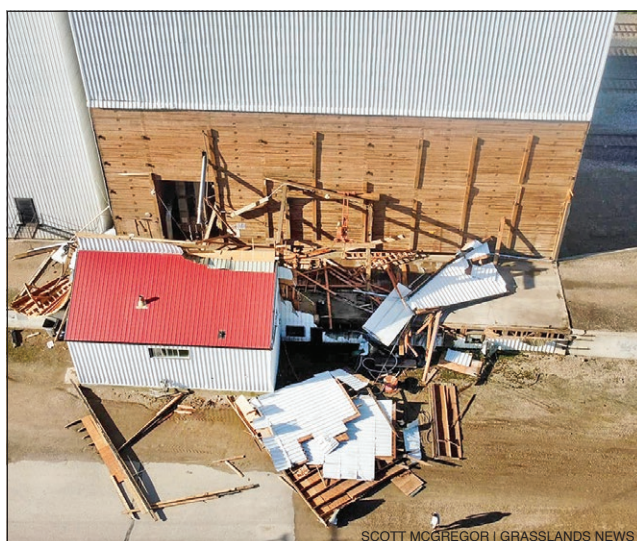
Strong winds tore siding off the Paterson elevator in Grenfell and caused a grain bin to collapse at the Viterra facility. Roofing was peeled from the north end of the GRP Arena, as well as the newly acquired tourist booth building. Smaller structures in the community and an RV were flattened, while another RV and a semi truck were flipped over by the wind. Council is expected to apply for the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program. Whitewood had previously applied to the program for the storm on June 21st that dropped 6

inches of rain in the area, causing damage to some residences and facilities.

Residents awoke last Saturday morning to shingles missing from their roofs and several farmers discovered grain bins flipped or their tops flattened in an unusual manner never experienced in past storms. One farmer east of Whitewood lost their barn to the wind as extensive damage was incurred when the roof blew off and walls collapsed on the older structure.

Branches were strewn around the communities and many large trees were snapped or uprooted, blocking roads. Some landed on power lines and others damaged vehicles. One large evergreen tree narrowly missed the Grenfell Museum while in Whitewood, large evergreens blew over in the cemetery, one landing on top of headstones and another just lying down between the rows of headstones. The old Whitewood Hospital also had a large evergreen snap off and land on the roof. Large trees were also reported uprooted on farms just to the southeast of Wolseley.

As a result of the storm, Grenfell Campground had extensive damage to its campsites. The Campground was closed until further notice as Public Works Employees and Contractors worked diligently to remove debris and trees. Bookings can be canceled with a full refund at lets-



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camp.ca.

Damages in all communities could not be estimated until the trees could be removed.

By Saturday evening, SaskPower reported that power had been restored for approximately 6,000 customers impacted by

the storm but 3,040 customers were still waiting for service. Power outages continued into Sunday for communities such as Grenfell, Zagime First Nation and rural areas near Whitewood. The rink in Grenfell was opened for people to get relief from the extreme heat being experienced over the week-

Monday around noon.

Municipal public works staff worked diligently to clear debris and in Grenfell, where it appeared the most extensive damage was experienced, public works and residents were assisted by Deboys Equipment and DigDug Excavating. Wolseley residents experienced similar property damage so tree service crews were called in to help. Landfills in Wolseley and Grenfell were even opened on Sunday so people could continue cleaning up from the storm.

Residents showed community spirit as they sought to deal with the storm's aftermath. People used their own trucks and chainsaws to help neighbours clear debris. In Grenfell, the recently opened Golf Spot in Grenfell provided breakfast and lunch for work crews on Saturday and community members donated food so the restaurant could serve breakfast on Sunday as well. Other residents also offered to prepare meals for families without power in the days following the storm.

Swimming lessons that were to start on Monday

in Grenfell were postponed until Tuesday and a makeup day is to be held next Monday. This is due to the pool being down with the power outage and the chemicals needed to be balanced.

On Tuesday morning, the RCMP were advising to be on the lookout as yearling bison were roaming in Melville/Yorkton area after recent storms.

"Due to recent storms in the Melville area, approximately 30-50 yearling bison have breached their fenced area and are roaming. They have been spotted along #SKHwy10 between Melville and Yorkton and between #SKHwy10 and #SKHwy47, going as far north as #SKHwy52. Please be on the lookout for the bison - they are young and do not know where to go. Melville/Ituna RCMP is advising motorists to use caution when traveling in these areas. A group of ranchers continue their efforts to locate and round up the animals. If you see one of the outstanding bison, for safety reasons, do not approach them and please call Melville RCMP at 306-728-1700."