

AT LEAST 17 DEAD IN OVERNIGHT STORMS IN PUTNAM COUNTY

A home on Highway 70 West across from the doll museum is among those destroyed in an early morning tornado in Putnam County

Paige Stanage | Herald-Citizen

Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020

At least 17 people are dead and another 88 injured in Putnam County.



Putnam County Emergency Management Agency Director Tyler Smith said some people were found lying in the roadway.

While the identities of those who died in the storms have not been released, Putnam County Sheriff Eddie Farris did confirm that at least one is a child and that they are still searching for those who are reported missing.

Melahn Finley of Cookeville Regional Medical Center said they initiated their protocol for emergency response about 2:30

a.m. Tuesday.

Just before 10 a.m., she said they've treated 80 patients. Five have been transferred to Erlanger. Two were transferred to University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Blood Assurance has announced a critical need for blood because of the storms.

The sheriff said the worst damage was from the western Cookeville city limits to the Baxter city limits.

The worst areas hit were Charleton Square, Plunk Whitson, Prosperity Point, North McBroom Chapel, Echo Valley, Double Springs Utility District and Eaton Road.

Cookeville Electric Department Director Carl Haney said they will have to do a complete rebuild of electrical systems in the western part of the city.

Haney said between 800 and 1,000 customers are without power. He said at least 20 electrical poles are broken.



Lenoir City electric department crews are coming to help.

"Our goal right now is to get the crews in, get the poles set, sometime this evening or tonight," Haney said.

Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation spokesman Terry Merriman said initially, the service had 10,000 outages. That number has been reduced to between 5 and 6,000 as of about 10:30 a.m.

Merriman said there was major damage on the Highway 70/Gainesboro Grade corridor. She said there is no estimated time for repair.

Tennessee Tech officials announced at 9 a.m. that they were closing campus and canceling classes for Tuesday.

Putnam County Schools were already scheduled to be out for Election Day.

The Tennessee National Guard is expected to fly over the Putnam area Tuesday morning to assess the damage, and Smith said the governor is on his way.

The National Weather Service is expected to assess damage Wednesday morning.

Smith said he thinks it was at least an F3 tornado or possibly an F4 that hit Putnam County overnight.

The tornado that struck Putnam in 1974 was classified as an F4.

MIDDLE-OF-THE-NIGHT TORNADO LEAVES 18 DEAD, 88 INJURED, 38 MISSING

Putnam County awakens to worst natural disaster in its history

Deanna Herald Speck and husband, Tony, of Cookeville, stand near what is left of her parents' house. Dwight and Sue Herald live in the Locust Grove community. The Heralds said the house started to shake and fell as they reached safety in the stairwell.

Jack McNeely | Herald-Citizen

Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020

BY LINDSAY MCREYNOLDS and KATE COOK

The deadliest tornado in Putnam County's history struck a quarter-mile-wide, two-mile long path of destruction along Highway 70 early Tuesday morning with little warning.

Putnam County Fair Board President John Allen said it sounded like a train coming through his house just after 2 a.m.

"The window in my living room blew in, the window in my computer room blew in," Allen said.

Allen, who lives on Highway 70 close to the Dipsy Doodle, in the middle of much of the tornado damage, said he grabbed his dog and ran to the bath tub.

"Things started hitting the house," he said.

After daylight hit, Allen saw two-by-fours, a Titans t-shirt and a child's flip flop among the debris in his yard, in addition to numerous emergency vehicles in front of his house.

"It wiped out several houses," Allen said of the tornado.

"I'm a little shaken up, but I'm doing fine," he said.

Allen was fortunate to be among those who survived.

Putnam County Sheriff Eddie Farris confirmed three dead before 7 a.m. Tuesday, but said that number was likely to rise. And it did. By the time Cookeville and Putnam officials gathered for a press conference at 11 a.m., 16 were confirmed dead.

Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter said they had set up a special morgue asking family members to identify the deceased.

The names of those who died were not released by press time, although the Herald-Citizen received unconfirmed reports of the identities of some of the victims.

Before 3 p.m., there were 17 confirmed deaths and 88 people treated at Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

At a press conference Tuesday evening, Farris said there were 250 law enforcement officers from 15 different agencies involved in search and rescue that day. By Tuesday evening, officers had searched 60 percent of the structures that hadn't been demolished in the tornado area. That's nearly 150 structures, he said. Some 60 officers would continue the search overnight.

Farris said the plan was for first responders to search a 20-acre field Wednesday. The field has high grass and is marshy and wet, which made it unsafe for rescuers to search overnight. Farris said he believes more debris and possibly victims will be found in the field.

One person was arrested for looting, Farris said. A male suspect was arrested looking for prescription medication at an unnamed apartment building.

The tornado area is under a curfew from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., he said.

Those still looking for friends and relatives were asked to call 646-4636. At a press conference Tuesday evening, Porter said the line had received a lot of calls.

"If it's busy, keep calling," he said.

People wanting to help were asked to email helpnow@putnamcountyttn.gov.

Between 800 and 1,000 people were without power Tuesday morning, according to Cookeville Electric Department Director Carl Haney. Just before 5, that number was whittled down to 250.

"We hope to have another 100 on over the next couple of hours," he said.

Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation officials initially reported 10,000 without power. Power was restored to about half those by mid-morning Tuesday with no estimated time of repair for the remaining customers.

City gas department director Jeff Mills said gas customers from Jackson Street to Double Springs will be without gas for the next few days.

"We're having to work between the other agencies," he said. "We're doing work on the outer edges. There's infrastructure we have to repair. It's a slow process."

Mills said if customers smell gas, call the gas department at 520-4427.

"Other than that, we ask for their patience," he said. "We're still in recovery mode."

Volunteers who would like to help clean up are meeting at the old Hobby Lobby shopping center on South Jefferson at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

The National Weather Service is expected to visit Putnam County Wednesday morning to make a determination about the rating for the intensity of the tornado.

Putnam County Emergency Management Agency Director Tyler Smith said he expected it would be rated an F3 or F4.

"This was a horrific day in Putnam County," Porter said.

At the evening press conference, Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton said officials are looking to set up a Cookeville/Putnam County Tornado Relief Fund, similar to the one county officials set up in Sevier County after the Gatlinburg wildfire.

"Pray for our hurting community," Shelton said. "There is only one Cookeville, we will get through this together."

The previous most deadly tornado to strike Putnam County was in 1974, when Putnam led the state with 11 deaths. That tornado was classified as an F4.

FAMILIES GROW ANXIOUS WAITING TO IDENTIFY LOVED ONES

Families waiting to identify loved ones were asked to fill out forms with details about those who were still unaccounted for.

Jim Herrin | Herald-Citizen

Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020

BY JIM HERRIN

As dozens of family members gathered at Church on the Hill in Algood Tuesday awaiting word about the fate of their loved ones, pastors and volunteers from a number of congregations were on hand to offer solace and prayer.

Pastor Justin Grant said his church family was among those affected.

"We had a text message saying that one of our church family members was in the ER, so our senior pastor, Paul Ramsey, and I went over there and they asked us to stay and talk to people," he said.

Grant said he also checked in at the county Health Department and the Cookeville Community Center to see if they needed anything.

"Then the hospital called and asked if they could set up a base here at the church, and, of course, we said yes," he said. "We've had church members calling us all morning saying that they're available to help."

Emergency officials instructed family members to go to the church in order to identify missing loved ones, but some expressed frustration at what they perceived as a long wait for information.

"They told us we were going to come over here and identify the body, but I don't believe that's going to happen," said one woman waiting in the church's sanctuary. "They took us from the scene. I feel like we've been misled the whole time."

Volunteers offered water and, as the day progressed, food and other snacks to the waiting families.

Health Department workers arrived about midday with identification forms for the family members to fill out, asking about the name of any missing relatives, their last known location and any identifying marks.

By 1:30 p.m. emergency officials were being briefed on the process that would be followed.

"We're just trying to give families some answers," said Assistant EMS Director Darrin Ford. "It's been a long day, and I think even longer for some of the families."

At a press conference Tuesday evening, County Mayor Randy Porter and Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton said they're doing everything they can to make sure folks get as much information as possible.

"We want to make sure the deceased are found and loved ones are notified," he said. "We'll be working through the night."

Porter said some of the victims were found relatively quickly early in the morning, others weren't found until later in the afternoon.

"Every community prepares for disasters, emergency situations. I don't think any amount of preparation can equate to what happened here today. This is a level unlike anything most have ever seen," Shelton said. "None of this was from lack of preparation, I can assure you. It was from the magnitude and how big this was."

Richard Farley of Life Church said he was first asked to go by Cookeville Regional Medical Center before relocating to Algood.

"They had people there that were just needing prayer and hadn't found their loved ones yet or heard anything about their loved ones, so we stayed with them awhile," he said. "I think all the churches are just trying to get together and say we're here when you need us."

'IT HIT US DEAD CENTER'

Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020
BY JIM HERRIN

"It hit us dead center. It wiped our house out and several houses in line with ours."

That's what Ted McWilliams said as he surveyed damage to his neighborhood on Clemmons Road Tuesday afternoon.

As it happens, McWilliams, an admissions counselor at Tennessee Tech, was in Chattanooga on university business when the tornado struck his home.

"My wife, Terri, and the kids were at home, and I think we both got the tornado alert," he said. "About two minutes after that, she called in a panic, saying they were downstairs, and the house had collapsed around them."

McWilliams said his brother-in-law came to check on the family and helped them out of the rubble. His middle son had injured his knee jumping from the top of the stairs as the walls collapsed around him, but everyone else was OK.

"Everybody's safe, but this whole area has been wiped clean," he said. "We had built an addition onto the house with a basement under it, and if we hadn't had that basement, they might not be here today."

McWilliams got home from Chattanooga about 4 a.m., and says the family is staying with his mother for the time being while they "figure out exactly where we're going to go."

In addition to his house, McWilliams lost four outbuildings and some five acres of trees that are "either gone or are going to have to be taken down."

"There are two trailers that I don't know where they came from that are on the property now," he said. "Plus, boats and lots and lots of debris."

Still, despite the property loss, McWilliams was thankful his family was spared what others are facing today.

"The most precious things are safe and sound," he said. "Now, we're just going through the rubble."

'IT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY'

Emily Hendrixson, Bryce Watts and a friend remove a washing machine from her West Broad Street home Tuesday morning after a tornado took off the roof.



twisted limbs.

Eva Dingwall
Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020
BY VANESSA CURRY

Masses of soggy insulation appeared all over the inside of Emily Hendrixson's two-bedroom home. It splattered on the walls, her new sectional couch, the kitchen counters, and her 3-year-old son's bedroom. Bits and pieces clung to her shoes as she moved room to room searching for anything she could salvage. The stuff even coated her car parked outside amid broken boards, crumpled pieces of siding and

"It happened so quickly," Hendrixson said as she surveyed what was left of her West Broad Street home after a Tuesday morning tornado tore through parts of Putnam County. Hendrixson and her son, Kellan, has just moved into the home on Feb. 1. She works a full-time job and also takes classes at Tennessee Tech University.

She and her boyfriend, Bryce Watts, had stayed up late watching T.V. but were asleep when a frighten Kellen woke them up. The heavy rainstorm scared him, she said.

"We heard something brushing up against the window and then in a matter of seconds glass just shattered in every room," she recalled.

She looked up and realize the roof was gone

“It was horrible,” Watts said. “It was the loudest thing I had ever heard.”

It didn’t take long before the couple said they heard their neighbors calling out for them. In the cold, wet dark of night that scrambled across the street into the safety of that neighbor’s home.

At daylight, they began cleaning up, loading hangers of clothing and other items into the trunk. Watts’ sister and her boyfriend came to help.

“I just don’t what’s going to happen now,” Hendrixson said.

13 STILL MISSING AFTER DEADLY TORNADO

Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020

BY BEN WHEELER

Thirteen people remain missing Wednesday morning after 18 were killed and hundreds displaced after the most deadly tornado in Putnam County's history.

County and city officials have identified 17 of the 18 victims. The unidentified female is 30 to 35 years old, with dark, curly hair. Anyone who has information can call 646-4636.

Five of the victims were children under the age of 13. Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter said they can't rule out an increase in the number of fatalities.

Hundreds of volunteers are heading to the hardest hit area between Cookeville and Baxter this morning to assist with search and rescue and cleanup efforts.

They will focus on a 20- to 25-acre marshy area of land in the Echo Valley area.

Sheriff Eddie Farris said they will search the area in six-man teams.

He said Hensley Road and Mockingbird Hill will also be searched.

Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton said they are working to establish a Cookeville-Putnam County Tornado Relief Fund for those who've inquired about donating to help.

Those who wish to donate or volunteer can email helpnow@putnamcountyttn.gov.

An updated list of 13 people still unaccounted for was released at 8:45 a.m.:

Katherine Julian

Penny Penelope Cole

David Phillips

Tommy Knight

Robin & Bethany Babb

Steven Mayo

Breanna Shelby

Joyce Wilson

Cleburn Rice

Tommy and April Robinson

Suzanne Long

If you are on the list, call 646-4636.

PUTNAM TORNADO CLASSIFIED EF-4

Lindsay McReynolds | Herald-Citizen

Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020

BY LINDSAY MCREYNOLDS

The deadliest tornado in Putnam County's history has been classified as an EF-4, according to Putnam Emergency Management Agency Director Tyler Smith.

The EF scale measures tornadoes from 0 to 5 based on the wind speed. A EF-0 has wind speeds ranging from 65 to 85 miles per hour, according to the National Weather Service. A tornado is classified as an EF-5 if it has wind speeds over 200 miles per hour.

The storm that killed 18 people in Putnam County and injured 88 others had wind speeds of 175 miles per hour based on a survey by the NWS Wednesday.



One person is still missing: Leah Suzanne Weeks.

(Photo: Rachel McCormick and her daughter, Ella, sort through clothing and shoes that can be salvaged from the home of Rachel's sister-in-law, Tracy Savage on Herald Court Wednesday.)

The skeletal remains of another person was discovered Wednesday in a wooded area near Miller Road, but the death is not believed to be storm related. Cookeville Police are investigating

that death.

(The skeletal remains found during search efforts after the March 3 tornado have been identified.

The remains of Brian Matthew Keserich, 34, were found March 4 inside a collapsed tent in a wooded area near Miller Road, according to the Cookeville Police Department release.

Keserich may have been homeless, the release states. He was originally from Kentucky with no known last address.

No foul play is suspected at this time, but the death still is under investigation.

If anyone has information related to this investigation, call the CPD Criminal Investigation Division at 520-5322 or the main station at 526-2125. Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN 6 May 2020).

"This is the first violent (and strongest) tornado in the NWS Nashville's forecast area (38 counties in Middle Tennessee) since the Murfreesboro Good Friday Tornado on April 10, 2009," according to the NWS. "There were EF-4s in 2015 in West Tennessee and 2011 in East Tennessee."

The path and width of the tornado will be surveyed by NWS Thursday and Friday.

At least 20 homes were destroyed to the foundation, according to Smith.

Between 150 to 200 structures were damaged by the tornado.

Sheriff Eddie Farris said a search of a 20- to 25-acre field in the tornado-damaged area is about 90 percent complete. He said they plan to complete that by noon Thursday.

A curfew for the area affected by the tornado is in effect from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Sheriff Farris said air traffic and drones are also restricted in the area, a temporary restriction granted by the FAA, until 10 a.m. Friday.

Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter estimated that 2,500 people came to help with search and rescue efforts as well as cleanup Wednesday.

"We can never voice the words for our gratitude and appreciation," he said.

Porter asked that volunteers stay away from the tornado-damaged area Thursday while power companies are stretching cable lines.

About 2,000 people in the Putnam area still don't have power, Porter said.

"The power companies are working 24/7 around the clock," he said.

Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton said Cookeville Electric Department still had about 150 customers without power.

"That'll be down to 75 within two hours," he said.

Rachel McCormick and her daughter, Ella, were sorting through the remains of clothing and personal items that belong to Rachel's sister-in-law, Tracy Savage, in what was left of Savage's home on Herald Court in the Westhaven subdivision off Highway 70.

Savage's house was leveled. Not even one wall was left standing. Rachel and her daughter were pulling out the salvageable clothes and shoes from the concrete pad of what used to be the garage while Savage's daughter, Deja, stood still in the middle of the wreckage.

"It's weird seeing the stuff they just wore to church," McCormick said.

One of the items they were looking for Wednesday was Savage's youngest daughter's piggy bank.

"My mom is dead set on finding it," McCormick said of the piggy bank. "She'd saved \$300. To a 13-year-old, that's her life savings."

The Savages' family cat was found alive under some debris, and the dog was taken to the animal shelter, where they were able to reclaim him.

McCormick said Tracy was injured but has already been discharged from the hospital. Her two daughters weren't home at the time the tornado struck. But she didn't think their neighbors had survived.

"Her (Tracy's) boyfriend woke her up, and they made it to the bathroom before the house came down," McCormick said.

Bob Miller was one of 30 volunteers that came in two 14-passenger vans with First Baptist Church to Herald Court.

"We've been in search mode," Miller said. "We've found a lot of personal items, marriage certificates."

Aspen Lafever, Hayley Herrin and Tyler Buck were among Tennessee Tech students who responded to an email from President Phil Oldham requesting that students volunteer while campus was closed Wednesday.

Lafever said her friend, Bayley Gaw, lived with his parents and siblings in a house that was also demolished near the Savages.

"He called me at 3:30 in the morning (Tuesday)," Lafever said. "They came outside. It was eerie quiet except for people screaming."

Lafever, Herrin and Buck met in the old Hobby Lobby parking lot with hundreds of others wanting to volunteer to help law enforcement with search and recovery efforts as well as cleanup.

"You see how much people are helping," Lafever said. "We're the volunteer state for a reason."

"I feel fortunate to help, to have the time to do this," Lafever continued. "Yesterday, I didn't know what to do. I donated blood."

On the stretch of Highway 70 where the tornado was most destructive, rescue squads from neighboring counties, insurance company cars, fire department trucks lined the street.

Cookeville Police Officer Marc deClaire said he, along with the rest of the CPD police force have been working since the tornado struck.

"I came in on my day off yesterday and worked til six," Officer deClaire said. "There's no such thing as you getting a day off for now."

Officers are covering patrol as well as storm-related work such as operating check points to control who comes and goes from the heaviest hit areas.

"We're not allowing just anybody to come through," Officer deClaire said.

U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn toured the area with Sheriff Eddie Farris Wednesday morning.

"It's just devastation that is heartbreaking," she said. "It's hard to imagine."

"I've seen some tornado damage, Katrina, hurricanes," Sen. Blackburn said. "What I'm seeing here is maybe the worst I've ever seen. I've seen war zones. It's hard to put in words how emotional it is for the community."

MISSING PERSONS LIST

Posted Tuesday, March 3, 2020

The following are persons who have been reported missing.
If you are on the list, call 646-4636 to update the list.

Rachel Baughman
Katherine Julian
Doreen Black
Ryan Hunter
Penny Penelope Cole
Phyllis Burchett
Charles Spurlock
Diana and Robert Smith
Michael Bowers
Iris Walker
Dwight Gentry
Rocky Smith
Stella Zuller
Ryan Packingham
Dustin Kingsland
David Phillips
Maureen Langford & Andi Otis
Lisa Burgess
Edward Carter
Tommy Knight
Robin & Bethany Babb
Joey Dedemicis
Joe Murphy Jr.
Denton Nelson
Glen & Anthony Phillips
Rick Stegill
Rocky Smith
Ryan Packingham
Tracy & Cody McGhee
Peyton Jackson
Colton Matheney
Kathy Koch
Joe Yoder

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Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020
BY BEN WHEELER

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David Phillips

Tommy Knight

Robin & Bethany Babb

Steven Mayo

Breanna Shelby

Joyce Wilson

Cleburn Rice

Tommy and April Robinson

Suzanne Long

If you are on the list, call 646-4636.

'WE WERE BLESSED' — MCBROOM CHAPEL MAN TELLS STORY OF SURVIVAL

Matt Mifflin stands in the rubble of what used to be his house on McBroom Chapel Road.
JACK MCNEELY | HERALD-CITIZEN

Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020
BY JACK MCNEELY

Matt and Katherine Mifflin of 3841 McBroom Chapel Road are fortunate to be alive.



“I don’t call it luck, we were blessed,” the 27-year-old chemist and Tennessee Tech grad said Wednesday. “Yes, we were blessed.”

The two were asleep in bed when their weather radio went off for the first time shortly after 1 a.m. Tuesday. “We got up and did our prep, put the cars in the garage and placed our inflatable bed in the hallway,” Matt explained.

“Then the radio went off again at 1:50. No, 1:54 a.m., that’s the time that I remember. It

sounded like a big truck was driving down the gravel road, but it kept getting louder.

“I felt the floor raise up, then the house started to tumble. I’ve had that moment in my head all day,” continued Matt, who held back tears. “Sorry.”

The two held each other and said, “I love you.” Their two-year-old German Shepherd mix was crated nearby. Matt said it seemed to last forever as they bounced off walls, but it actually lasted “probably eight seconds,” he said.

In those few seconds, their quaint, 960-square-foot house was diminished to piles of rubble about 35 feet from its foundation. Matt and others returned Wednesday to make sense of the disaster they survived while several others within a few hundred feet had not.

While Matt is recovering from mental scars, Katherine is pretty banged up and resting, he noted. Their four-legged companion survived as well.

As of Wednesday evening, the killer tornado that barreled through the McBroom Chapel area and several other residential neighborhoods along Highway 70 just west of Cookeville had claimed 18 lives.

TORNADO CLEANUP: NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Volunteer David Cargile, 53, of Tullahoma, dismantles the large limbs of a fallen maple tree.
JACK MCNEELY | HERALD-CITIZEN





Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020
BY JIM HERRIN

The roar of multiple chainsaws echoed up and down the streets of west Cookeville Wednesday as thousands of volunteers abandoned their regular daily responsibilities to lend a hand to their neighbors.

"We thought we should help the people that need help," said Kendra Mahan as she cleared brush from property along West Broad Street. "A lot needs to be done."

Kevin McCaleb, who was working alongside Kendra, said "We've been a part of this community for years, and you just gotta help."

The sentiment was echoed by Kiara Ferrell.

"I was lucky. I didn't have any damage," she said. "My work actually let me volunteer. I work at SunTrust, and they told us to come out here and help, so we're out here picking up trash and doing whatever."

Mia Ferrell said she was able to help out around her regular work schedule.

"I don't work until later on tonight, so I thought I might as well help," she said. "We live in town, so we got lucky, but we've got friends and family who live out here."

Representatives of the Upper Cumberland Development District and the 13th Judicial District Attorney's office also spent the day helping out.

"This is where I need to be. My entire family is here," said District Attorney Bryant Dunaway. "This is just an amazing community that we live in. What you see here is just everyday citizens helping each other. We try our best to unburden the burdened and support each other."

Tommy Lee, deputy director of the Upper Cumberland Development District, brought along some of his co-workers as well.

"We decided that we would get together and come out and help the community," he said. "That comes from the vision of our executive director, Mark Farley. He wants to make sure that we are able to help in any capacity we can."

Lee confirmed that Farley's niece was among those killed.

SKELETAL REMAINS FOUND DURING STORM SEARCH EFFORTS

Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020

CPD — At approximately 12:05 p.m. March 4, a deceased individual was discovered within a collapsed tent in a wooded area near Miller Road. The individual was located during search efforts related to the recent storm damage.

Detectives with the Cookeville Police Department responded and initiated an investigation. The skeletal remains of the unidentified individual were recovered and sent to the Davidson County Medical Examiner's Office where an autopsy will be performed to help determine the official cause of death, manner of death and identification of this person.

This death remains under investigation. If anyone has information related to the investigation and has not yet spoken with police, please call the Criminal Investigation Division of the Cookeville Police Department at 931-520-5322 or the main station at 931-526-2125.

TORNADO FATALITIES

Posted Wednesday, March 4, 2020

The complete list of deceased was announced at about 10:45:

Jessica Clark – 30's female

Amanda Cole – 34 year old female

Hattie Collins – 3 to 4 year old female

Dawson Curtis – 6 to 7 year old female

Terry Curtis – 54 year old male

Joshua Kimberlin – male in his 30s

Sawyer Kimberlin – 2 to 3 year old male

Erin Kimberlin – female in her 30s

Todd Koehler – male in his 50s

Sue Koehler – female in her 50s

Patricia Lane – 67 year old female



Leisha Rittenberry – 28 year old female

Harlan Marsh – 4 to 5 year old male

Bridgette (Ann Marie) McCormick – 12 to 13 year old female

Keith Selby – male

Cathy Selby – female

Jamie Smith – 30 to 35 year old female

Stephanie Fields — a female in her 30s

**TENNESSEE TORNADOES: RESIDENTS BEGIN TO PICK UP PIECES AFTER
STORMS KILL AT LEAST 24 PEOPLE**

Items at the home of Bill and Linda Leath are seen in Cookeville, Tenn. The storms hit the area early Tuesday morning. Bill and Linda were trapped in the bedroom during the storm. They were both unharmed.

(Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

By Frances Stead Sellers, Brandon Gee and Annie Gowen

March 4 at 8:25 PM

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. — Eric Johnson didn't understand the red letters on his garage wall when he arrived back at the foundation where his house once stood, long after the tornado had gone and the screams were just faint echoes in his ears.

“DOAx2” spray-painted in bright red. Two people. Dead on arrival.

His own family had survived Tuesday's devastating tornado crouched in a bathtub, with Johnson holding his wife and kids down until the tornado suctioned him off and flung him, praying to the Lord, 50 yards onto a mound of debris. He had wrapped a shirt around his bleeding head and found his wife, Faith, now perched on the broken tub, clasping their two toddlers tightly to her side. The 18-month-old still held his sippy cup in his mouth.

The bodies of two strangers had landed in their garage, Johnson later learned. A mother and a child from who knows where delivered to his door on the wind's cruel whims.

Johnson and his family are survivors among the wreckage of many lives. He has nine staples in his head. Faith has three broken ribs. And they are reliving the howls of anguish, the struggle to free a dying neighbor pinned by rubble, and watching rescue workers comb through a swampy area across the street where other bodies may have found a dank and lonely resting place.

“It wasn't my time,” Johnson said. “We are walking miracles, me and my wife.”

PUTNAM DEATH TOLL REMAINS AT 18

Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter, alongside Sheriff Eddie Farris, Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton and U.S. Rep. John Rose, gives an update about the loss of life and clean up efforts following the deadly

tornado that struck Putnam County Tuesday morning. Putnam officials have held multiple press briefings about fatalities, those injured and missing as well as recovery and cleanup efforts.
Lindsay McReynolds | Herald-Citizen

Posted Thursday, March 5, 2020
BY LINDSAY MCREYNOLDS

No more fatalities have been reported, and no more people are missing following Tuesday's early morning tornado in Putnam County.

"There were no other victims discovered, no other deaths," Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter said during a press conference Thursday night. "The death toll remains at 18 as it was yesterday."

Those injured in the tornado remains at 88 as well.

"As far as we know, patients treated are still alive," Porter said. "We don't know their status."

Porter said over 400 residents suffered some type of damage from the tornado, which was classified as an F4 by the National Weather Service, and 31 commercial properties suffered damage.



"Nearly 100 residences were completely destroyed," Porter said.

Twenty people remained in the Red Cross Shelter at First Baptist Church in Cookeville Thursday night.

Others displaced by the tornado are staying with friends, relatives and in hotels.

Cookeville Electric Department had about 25 customers still without power as of Thursday

evening, and about 1,300 Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation customers were also lacking power.

Sheriff Eddie Farris said search and rescue efforts turned into recovery Thursday, and the curfew for the tornado-damaged area along Highway 70 between Cookeville and Baxter remains in effect from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. Temporary flight restrictions over the area are in effect until 10 a.m. Saturday.

The sheriff said 42 firearms have been found in the area.

Sheriff Farris said that Highway 70 will likely be closed to through-traffic until the middle of next week.

"We have power companies working," he said. "It's a safety issue. Then dump trucks, heavy equipment, and a lot of pickup. When we initially arrived, there were so many flat tires on emergency vehicles, we had to ask maintenance to come out and change tires. There's a lot of things we have to do before we open the road back up."

U.S. representatives and senators from Tennessee asked President Donald Trump for federal disaster assistance for Tennessee counties devastated by tornadoes this week.

After Thursday's press conference, the President declared that a major disaster exists in the State of Tennessee and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in Davidson, Putnam and Wilson counties.

Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance Friday by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-3362 or 1-800-462-7585 for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

The president is expected to arrive in Nashville Friday morning.

Porter said they're working on a plan for volunteers who want to help Saturday. Officials are asking volunteers to stay away from the tornado-damaged area Friday while power continues to be restored there.

Cookeville Vice Mayor Laurin Wheaton said the council held a moment of silence for one of city's employees who died in the tornado, Jessica Clark, during the Thursday council meeting, as well as others impacted by the storms.

"The city has a number of employees who lost everything," she said.

Porter said the hours at the county landfill on Cookeville Boatdock Road and the transfer station on South Jefferson Avenue will be expanded to seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for people wanting to bring debris.

A Cookeville Putnam County Tornado Relief Fund has already collected \$125,000 for victims in less than 24 hours. Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton said people can donate at 19 Bank of Putnam County locations, through Venmo, PayPal, by texting cookevillehelp to 41444 or at putnamcountyttn.gov.

This weekend's home and garden show presented by the Home Builders Association of the Upper Cumberland has been postponed until Oct. 16-17.

CRMC WON'T CHARGE TORNADO PATIENTS

Posted Thursday, March 5, 2020
BY KATE COOK

The 82 patients with tornado-related injuries won't receive a bill from Cookeville Regional Medical Center.

CRMC Chief Financial Officer Steve Ramey said the hospital will bill the patients' insurance, but they'll write off the patient portion of the cost.

"We're going to bill the insurance and accept the insurance payment as payment in full," Ramey said. "None of the patients will get a bill from us."

Chief Operating Officer Scott Williams said if one of those 82 patients receives a CRMC bill, they just have to notify the hospital's business office, and it'll be removed.

This only affects the 82 tornado patients and the services they received at the hospital, Ramey said. They may receive bills for the ambulance ride, independent physicians or from other hospitals if they were transferred, but they won't receive any CRMC bills.

"We're trying to contact all those hospitals to let them know how we're handling it," Ramey said. "We don't know what they'll do, but this is what we're doing."

"We're encouraging all those providers to do something in kind," Williams said.

The 82 patients have been identified and notified, Ramey said.

WV GROUP VISITS BAXTER TO PROVIDE MEALS

Posted Thursday, March 5, 2020
BY PAIGE STANAGE

Members of a non-profit group from West Virginia are coming to Baxter Friday to give out hot, fresh meals to those impacted by the tornado and those helping to clean this weekend.

Those with the Beckley Dream Center, a faith-based non-profit organization, are coming to the Baxter Depot Friday with their mobile kitchen, said Baxter Mayor John Martin.

"A group from West Virginia is going to be here tomorrow," Martin said. "They're setting up at the Depot and will provide 200 meals each day until Sunday to any of the people involved in the tornado. It's a great project, and it's great for them to come and do this for us."

The Beckley Dream Center will have their mobile kitchen at the Baxter Visitor Center and Train Depot, located at 216 Broad Street in Baxter, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, serving approximately 200 hot meals daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Martin and Tammie Wicker Pullum coordinated this effort to assist those in need.

"I know our city workers have been involved in this all week," Martin said. "Everyone in our departments have been involved with it, and I just want to thank each and every one of you. This has been such a devastating thing.

"Back in the '70s we had a group of tornados rip through the areas, and it was bad. But I never imagined anything like this. This is the worst thing I've ever witnessed in my life."

SCHOOL FAMILY TOUCHED BY TORNADO

Interim Director of School Corby King, right, and School Board Chair Dawn Fry talk about students and staff affected by this week's tornado.

Jim Herrin | Herald-Citizen

Posted Thursday, March 5, 2020
BY JIM HERRIN

As the Putnam County School Board meeting began Thursday, members observed a moment of silence for those affected by this week's tornado.

"I've been thinking all day that I wanted to say something, but I have to say words still fail me," said board chair Dawn Fry. "I don't know what to say, but I want to thank everybody in our school system for the response that I have seen, (and) everyone in our community as a whole."



"It's hard to talk about. It's difficult," said Interim Director of Schools Corby King. "We lost two students this week — a middle school student at Upperman Middle School (Bridgett McCormick) and a Pre-K student at Cane Creek Elementary School. (Harlan Marsh)."

In addition to the deaths, King said the school system has been trying to help students and staff whose homes were lost or damaged.

"We have 126 students who have some damage to their home, whether its partial or total loss," he said. "Seventeen faculty and staff members have some sort of loss in their homes, so it's a trying week for our school family."

King said school employees, like others, have responded to the tragedy with a willingness to help.

"I can't say enough about our teachers, our supervisors, and our principals," he said. "On Tuesday, we had a team of social workers and counselors that met with the families at Church on the Hill as they were identifying their loved ones that didn't make it. Our people were there assisting with that. All of our principals, all of our supervisors were here (asking) what can we do, how do we help?"

School officials say no school buildings were damaged by the tornado, but classes were canceled through Friday as the community dealt with the tragedy.

"We're making plans now to get back to school next week," he said. "It's going to be difficult for some. We're going to work with them, we're going to provide what they need, we're going to be patient and just support families. Just love the kids and love the families."

Fry added, "That support is going to continue for as long as our families and students need that.

TENNESSEE TORNADOES: DOZENS STILL MISSING

AFTER STORMS THAT KILLED AT LEAST 24 PEOPLE

Add to list

Iguanas in South Florida became immobilized Jan. 22 when temperatures dropped to 39 degrees. The animals, though cold blooded, stiffen when temperatures dip. (Allie Caren/The Washington Post)

By [Frances Stead Sellers](#) ,

[Meryl Kornfield](#) ,

[Kim Bellware](#) and

Brandon Gee

March 4 at 4:14 PM

NASHVILLE — The Rev. Lisa Hammonds didn't lose her home.

But in another way, the senior pastor at St. John AME Church in north Nashville did.

"I was baptized in this church," Hammonds said, evaluating what was left of her house of worship. "My grandmother was funeralized in this church. I started ministry in this church. I got married in this church. And when I rounded the corner, I saw this."

One of several deadly tornadoes that touched down in Tennessee on Tuesday just after midnight tore the church's entrance away and peeled its roof back, opening the sanctuary to the sky. Inside, ceilings are collapsed and water is leaking throughout the building. Shards of stained glass, ceiling tiles and other debris speckle the floors. On Wednesday, Hammonds stood on the front steps, awaiting an insurance adjuster.

A day after the deadliest tornado outbreak in Tennessee since at least 2011, a state of emergency is still in effect as tens of thousands of residents grapple with the lack of electricity and utilities, impassable roads and insurance paperwork. Roaring tornadoes [killed at least 24 people and flattened buildings](#) across four counties Tuesday. An EF-3 tornado with winds up to 165 mph tore across the Nashville area, killing two people downtown, according to the National Weather Service.

In Putnam County, which was the hardest hit, at least 18 were killed by the storms, five of whom were children, officials said. Deputies and volunteers searched for others who remained missing Wednesday.

Hammonds and other Tennessee residents spread out across the tornadoes' 50-mile path spent Wednesday walking through the wreckage.

Gov. Bill Lee (R), who surveyed the area via helicopter Tuesday, said it will take days just to assess the damage the storm left behind.

"No one was ready for it," he said on Fox News on Wednesday. "It came in the middle of the night."

The National Weather Service had sent alerts out just before the twisters took shape, but the storms moved quickly, making it difficult for many to get to safety in time.

"It hit so fast, a lot of folks didn't have time to take shelter," Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter said Tuesday. "Many of these folks were sleeping."

Putnam County officials said five of the 18 killed were children under 13. The youngest, 2-year old Sawyer Kimberlin, died along with his parents, Josh and Erin, local media reported.

In coordination with the sheriff's office, the county is attempting to locate people who were reported missing by family or friends, but some of them simply may not have been able to call loved ones, Porter said.

"Yesterday was a terrible day for cell service," he said.

As of Wednesday afternoon, there are 17 people missing in that county.

Deputies and volunteers are still combing through debris and marshland in Putnam County, where about 100 homes were destroyed or badly damaged, officials said.

In Nashville, at least 48 buildings collapsed, according to Fire Chief William Swann. Officials said gas leaks were "a major concern" in the tornado's wake. About 250 electrical poles were downed or damaged, according to Nashville Electric Service.

"Now we are in the transition from yesterday's emergency to recovery," Nashville Mayor John Cooper said Wednesday. "The next phase will be rebuilding."

Not everyone was focused on rebuilding. Maurice Morton, 56, walked through the remnants of the Nashville home he rents, wondering whether he could get back the rent check he paid a few days ago. Winds peeled back the roof, picked up Morton and tossed him several feet from where he was sitting. He still has glass embedded in his palms.

"I'm down to nothing now," he said.

Basement East, an iconic music venue in Nashville, was nearly flattened. One surviving wall had a red, white and blue “I believe in Nashville” mural painted on it.

Three or four agricultural buildings at the Tennessee State University were damaged. The historic Tennessee State Prison was also destroyed.

John C. Tune Airport in west Nashville remains closed after winds tore apart 17 hangars, signage, lighting, fencing and more, causing \$93 million in infrastructure damage alone, said Kym Gerlock, a Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority spokeswoman. The cost of damage to more than 90 aircraft is unknown. Nashville International Airport wasn’t impacted by the storms.

Several schools in Davidson and Wilson counties were significantly damaged. The Tennessee Department of Education is planning to relocate impacted schools, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency said Wednesday.

Donelson Christian Academy, a private school outside Nashville, was pulverized by a tornado. Barb Oakley, who teaches prekindergarten there, was still reeling Wednesday. She wiped back tears as she surveyed the damage.

“We live by the weather,” reflected Oakley, who just hours before the storm read a book called “Lucky Girl” to the 4-year-olds in her class — a story about a family that survives a tornado only to find the baby is missing. The whole town joins a frantic search until the baby is found, safely sleeping in her crib in a pasture.

“I hope that helped them,” Oakley said, who appeared dazed by the destruction she was seeing for the first time.

Under the collapsed roof, she could spot some of the supplies from her classroom. No sign of “Lucky Girl” though.

“It’s stuff,” Oakley said, straightening up. “We’re not looking at little feet under these boards.”

Some residents sifted through debris to find belongings that the high winds had stolen.

In Donelson, Jack Odum and a security guard stood at the entrance of three office buildings he owned, preparing to retrieve records and tools from a safe room.

While two of the buildings were mostly intact, the storm had ripped the roof off the third, snarling plasterboard with paperwork, buckets and branches, and yard upon yard of yellow insulation.

But the thing that puzzled Odum most was the heavy-duty dumpster that had flown maybe 1,000 feet from a neighbor’s property and landed in his.

“Never seen anything like it,” he said.

President Trump announced Tuesday that he would visit the area Friday.

“Our hearts are full of sorrow for the lives that were lost,” Trump said. “It’s a vicious thing, those tornadoes. I’ve seen many of them during a three-year period. If you’re in their path, bad things happen. Really bad things happen.”

TRUMP SURVEYS TORNADO DAMAGE, MARVELS AT

'TREMENDOUS HEART'

Posted Saturday, March 7, 2020

President Donald Trump speaks Mike Herrick, with Putnam County Rescue Squad, as he tours damage from a recent tornado, Friday, March 6, 2020, in Cookeville, Tenn. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)
AP

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday toured a neighborhood reduced to rubble by a tornado earlier this week and marveled at "the tremendous heart" he witnessed. He also offered a message for survivors and those who lost family members: "We love them, they're special people," he said.



Trump assumed the role of national consoler as he traveled to Tennessee. Trump surveyed devastated communities in Putnam County, where a tornado tore a 2-mile-long path, killing 18 people, including five children under 13. Many more people were injured, some critically.

Statewide, the death toll stood at 24 from a pair of storms.

Trump was met upon his arrival by Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn and other top officials.

"It's been a painful, tragic week for our state," Lee said after surveying with Trump a street where eight people were killed.

The street was filled with debris where houses once stood. Limbs were crudely snapped from trees. A white laundry basket, chairs from a dining table, cinder blocks and a step ladder dotted the landscape.

Trump then met with survivors and volunteers at a local church filled with boxes of emergency supplies, pallets of water and tables filled with clothes.

"When you have those who lost somebody, that's a very tough situation," Trump said during the nearly 40-minute stop. "We are with you all the way."

He posed for pictures and shook hands with people before speaking to emergency personnel. "Nobody's seen what you had to go through," Trump said.

Such trips have become familiar for the president, who has visited numerous scenes of disaster and tragedy after hurricanes, mass shootings and wildfires during the past three years.

The Republican president won the heavily GOP state by 26 percentage points in the 2016 election, and trounced Democrat Hillary Clinton in Putnam County by a margin of more than 2-to-1. Davidson County, the other Tennessee region devastated by tornadoes, is a Democratic enclave in the reliably Republican red state.

Trump will also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, which is leading efforts to stop the spread of the new coronavirus. He will end the day at his private Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, attending a pair of fundraising events to benefit the Republican Party and his reelection campaign.

TWO CORPORATIONS OFFER TO PAY FUNERAL COSTS FOR ALL 23 TORNADO CASUALTIES

by: [Elizabeth White](#)

Posted: Mar 6, 2019 / 01:15 AM EST / Updated: Mar 6, 2019 / 01:39 AM EST

LEE COUNTY, Ala. (WRBL) As the Beauregard community continues their recovery efforts, the families of 23 victims killed in Sunday's catastrophic tornado will not have to worry about paying for their loved one's funerals.

Coroner Bill Harris tells News 3 two large corporations have reached out to him and will pay for all 23 casualties to be laid to rest.

Harris says the details are still being worked out and at this point, he is not saying the names of the two corporations.

"I received the two phone calls today from two large corporations within thirty minutes of each other offering to pay for the funerals for the 23 victims. This will be a huge relief for the families especially for those who have multiple victims they need to bury. This will ease a huge expense as these families continue to mourn," said Harris.

Harris says he will be working with the corporations to help families make arrangements to ease their worry and concern.

LONGTIME RESTAURANT SHOWS LOVE, SUPPORT FOR PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY - DIPSY DOODLE DRIVE INN

Updated Mar 5, 2020 | Posted on Mar 4, 2020 (News 4)

https://www.wsmv.com/news/longtime-restaurant-shows-love-support-for-putnam-county-community/article_4e3f4f94-5e8f-11ea-a298-8f21473ad2c3.html

You ring the bell at Dipsy Doodle Drive Inn when you're leaving happy. Debi Daniels will make sure you're not leaving her place hungry.



"We're home of the giant cheeseburger and mile high pies," she smiled.

Look around the Putnam County restaurant, and you'll see pictures of the longtime customers. Familiar faces are everything to Debi.

That's why it's so hard having her Dipsy Doodle next to where her customers' homes were destroyed in the path of a tornado.

"You have no idea," said Debi, referring to the homes around W. Broad Street. "You have no idea the way this place is."



The destruction has taken the lives of several of those familiar faces who walked through Debi's door.

"The worst part of this is all those little children," she said. "Their life was just beginning, y'know?"

There's hope here.

All around Wednesday, people chain

sawed limbs and hauled debris into piles.

Debi is doing what she can too.

"Set it over there," she said, directing people walking in with jugs of water.

The Dipsy Doodle is a refuge to all the workers, a place to get some coffee, use a bathroom, grab an orange, candy bar, crackers, water, or whatever they need to be ready to return to work.

"Pray for Putnam County," said Debi. "Pray for these families who have lost their loved ones. They need prayers right now."

CHURCH ELDER MARVELS AT TORNADO RESPONSE

Double Springs Church of Christ Elder Rodney Mathis points out some of the many donations being distributed from the church in the wake of last week's tornado.

Jim Herrin | Herald-Citizen



Posted Thursday, March 12, 2020
BY JIM HERRIN

Rodney Mathis, one of the elders at Double Springs Church of Christ, continues to be amazed at the response of individuals wanting to assist with tornado relief.

"This has brought this community, county, middle Tennessee closer than it's ever been since I've lived here," he said Wednesday as he walked among the donations that have come into a distribution center set up at the church.

Mathis is also a victim of the tornado.

"My house is the last one that got damaged (in our neighborhood)," he said. "My phone went off. I had a minute to get to the basement. As quick as my last foot hit the basement floor, it was over, so we went upstairs, I found a flashlight that would work and started shining it (seeing the devastation.) That's when I started going from house to house."

He was able to help several neighbors escape from the rubble of their homes in spite of the fact that he was still recovering from surgery.

"I was out with surgery on my foot, and I've been able to barely walk," he said. "I had the closing prayer the Sunday before the tornado and someone had to help me up on the stage."

That didn't matter when he saw the destruction in his neighborhood.

"I ran to (a neighbor's) house. I don't know how I did it. I climbed over stuff going through her hallway because I knew where her bedroom was," he said. "She was laying flat on the floor with stuff on top of her. I threw it off, and she couldn't get up, so I had to pick her up."

Mathis said he went to about eight houses that morning.

"Have you taken time for yourself?" a volunteer with the Salvation Army asked him as he relayed the story.

"I haven't had time to take time for myself," Mathis replied.

"Listen, it's important," she cautioned. "Because after you slow down, it's rough to process it all. We're here for that if you need to talk."

Trailers from the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and other organizations are set up in the parking lot of the church.

The church was also visited Tuesday by the UT men's basketball team, which stopped on their way to Nashville for the SEC Tournament.

Mathis has been staying a motel as he begins to navigate the process of applying for aid from FEMA and other organizations, but still marvels at the outpouring of support.

"A church in West Monroe, Louisiana sent us \$10,000 to help with this — all the way from Louisiana," he said. "You wouldn't believe the country music singers and the volunteers that have donated and paid for rooms. I haven't paid for a night since I've been there."

'I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL EVER GET OVER IT': TORNADO SURVIVOR TALKS

Brenda Bush lives off of Highway 70 with her family and was lucky to make it out with only minor damage. Bush spoke with FEMA officials Friday about damage assistance.
Ben Wheeler | Herald-Citizen

Posted Saturday, March 14, 2020

BY BEN WHEELER

"I said it's already here, and we had a few seconds to get into the bathroom. I just started praying to God, 'Please don't let it take us away.'"



That's how Royal Oak Drive resident Brenda Bush described the moments before a tornado ripped through her neighborhood March 3.

"I could hear everything just flying. Then all of sudden it just got quiet, and we started screaming to the neighbors if they were okay," Bush said. "We heard a lady screaming, and she was hanging out of a window, with a big gash in her leg. She didn't even know she had it."

Bush says she feels guilty because they survived while others lost everything. The March 3 tornado claimed the lives of 19 people in Putnam County. Bush's house has only minor damage. A metal outbuilding wrapped around one of her trees. But the devastation she's seen has left her with the anxiety that this is going to happen again.

"We just have minor damage, but it just looks like a war zone. We went to see it, and it just brings back memories," Bush said. "I just don't want to go through it no more. I've never been this close in my life to losing everything I've got and my whole family. It's been a horrifying experience, and I just don't want to experience it ever again."

Bush works as a CNA at Bethesda Health Care. Going back to work has helped keep her mind off the disaster and the damage that surrounds her home.

"It's hard to get back into gear of going back to work," Bush said. "Back in the routine, it's like I'm there but I'm not there, but I've got to be there for the elderly people that I take care of. I try not to think about and get back into the same old gear. Then I get back home

"It's like a nightmare or a dream. Surely when I close my eyes and open them back up it will be gone but it doesn't go away. I don't know if I'll ever get over it."

Bush was one of many Putnam residents to speak with Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross officials about damage assistance from the March 3 storms.

"Our Disaster Survivor Assistance team have been out since Monday. They go door-to-door canvassing the area to check if people have already registered for assistance," FEMA Media Relations Specialist Cheria Brown said. "If they have registered, they can follow up on their application. They're also assessing and reporting property damage."

Brown said people need to make sure to apply for damage assistance, especially if they are underinsured or lack insurance.

There are a number of ways to file for assistance, such as calling the FEMA hotline 1-800-621-3362, visiting the Disaster Recovery Center at the Hyder Burks Pavilion at 2390 Gainesboro Grade, online at disasterassistance.org and through the FEMA app.

"We're here for as long as we are needed," Brown said.

Those applying for disaster assistance should also consider an application with the Small Business Association. If you receive a letter denying assistance, read it thoroughly to make sure it's not something minor that's restricting assistance.

Brandy Nicole Barker Obt.

b. 1981- d. 3 March 2020



Brandy Barker passed away on March 3, 2020 at age 38. The Memorial Service is 11 a.m. Saturday, March 7, 2020 in the chapel of Sellars Funeral Home, Lebanon TN. Visitation will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday. Ms. Barker worked as a Security Officer for G4S. She spent her life building a future for her children and giving them the best life possible. She enjoyed exercising, cosmetology, and had a passion for softball much of her life. Spending time with her family and watching them grow kept her spirits high. She is survived by two children: Cailey Apple and Dalsten Bennett; fiancé: Chad Berryhill; mother: Connie Hill; sister: Melanie Howard; and niece: Chelsea Sanders. She is preceded in death by father Robert Howard and grandparents Dorothy and Robert Kay Howard. Sellars Funeral Home, Lebanon TN, 615.444.9393.

Jessica (Rector) Clark Obt.

b. 21 June 1988, Putnam Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Putnam Co., TN, md Michael Glen Clark. Jessica (Rector) Clark, d/o Jackie Rector & Nancy Gentry.
(Victim of the tornado that killed 18 people in Putnam Co., TN on the 3rd of March 2020)

Jessie Clark, 31, touched many lives. She worked for the City of Cookeville, was active in her church, and was the secretary of the Putnam County Fair Board. “She called me a lot, always asking for things to help the fair,” Rep. Ryan Williams said “I’m going to miss her calls, she was a great advocate for the county and the fair.” Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: March 6, 2020

COOKEVILLE — Funeral services for Jessica Rector Clark, 31, of Cookeville, Tennessee, will be held Sunday, March 8, at 3 p.m. at Cumberland Presbyterian Church, at 565 East 10th Street in Cookeville, with Rev. Christian Smith and Frank Rodgers officiating. Burial will follow at Cookeville City Cemetery.



Visitation will be held at Cumberland Presbyterian Church Saturday, March 7, from 3-8 p.m., and Sunday, March 8, from 1:30 p.m. until service time at 3 p.m.

Mrs. Clark passed away Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

She was born June 21, 1988, in Putnam County, Tennessee, to Jackie Rector and Nancy Gentry Rector. She worked as an Acct. Tech for the City of Cookeville. Jessica was an active member at Cumberland Presbyterian Church and also served as Secretary of the Putnam County Fair Board, Consultant for Mary Kay, and worked at the Cumberland

Presbyterian Church in the Nursery.

Jessica was known and loved by everyone she met.

Her survivors include her husband, Michael Glen Clark of Cookeville; parents, Jackie Rector and Nancy Gentry Rector of Cookeville; brother, Levi Rector of Cookeville; grandmother, Willene Gentry of Cookeville; mother-in-law, Sherry Tinch Miller of Sparta, Tennessee; and a host of aunts, uncles and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Jere R. Gentry, Larmon and Prietta Rector; and father-in-law, Glen Clark.

Family and friends will serve as pallbearers.

Honorary pallbearers will be members of the Putnam County Fair Board.

In lieu of flowers, a GoFundMe account is set up In Memory of Jessica Rector Clark and an account is set up at First Horizon Bank.

Flowers may be sent to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 565 East 10th Street, Cookeville TN 38501.

Whitson Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, 526-2151.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: March 6, 2020

Amanda Cole Obt.

b. 11 February 1986, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN – d. 4 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN. Amanda Cole, d/o **Jerry Dale Cole** (1955-2018) & **Phyllis Elaine Farley**. Jerry Dale Cole is buried in Carter Cemetery, White Co., TN.

Amanda Ann Cole, 34, of Sparta, TN passed away Tuesday, in the early morning hours of March 4, 2020 in Cookeville, TN. She was born on February 11, 1986 to Jerry and Phyllis Cole in Cookeville, TN.



Amanda was a member of Cumberland Heights Church of Christ.

She was preceded in death by her; Father- Jerry Cole, Grandparents- Ridley and Ann Cole, Grandfather- Jack Farley and Aunt- Donna Cole.

Amanda is survived by; Mother-Phyllis Cole of Sparta, TN

Sisters- Lakota Griffin (Brandon) and Sarah Christian (Thomas) both of Sparta, TN

Brother- Jeremiah Cole of Sparta, TN

Grandmother- Sylvia Farley of Sparta, TN

Uncle- Mark Farley (Carla) of Sparta, TN

Cousins- Chase Farley (Eileen) and Jake Farley both of Sparta, TN

The family wishes to mention Dawson Curtis who also lost his life with Amanda.

A Memorial Service will be held Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 1 p.m. at Cumberland Heights Church of Christ in Doyle, TN with Doug Downs officiating. The family will receive friends on Saturday at the church from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Online condolences may be made to the family at oaklawnmemorial.com

Oak Lawn Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN 8 March 2020

Hattie Jo Collins Obt.

b. 2017- d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, d/o **Matt Collins & Macy England**.



Several people died on March 3rd, 2020, after an EF-4 tornado ravaged through a quite neighborhood.

Hattie's parents and baby sister were injured and remain in hospital, but are expected to survive. Hattie suffered serious injuries and unfortunately did not survive the fatal disaster.

Hattie was the daughter of church youth minister Matt and his wife, Macy Collins. Pat was described as a beloved sister of the church.

Funeral services for Hattie Jo Collins, 4 year old daughter of Matt and Macy England Collins of Cookeville, will be held Friday March 13 at 11 a.m. at Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ.

Hattie's family will receive friends Thursday from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. until service time at Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ.

Hattie Jo passed away Tuesday morning March 3, 2020.

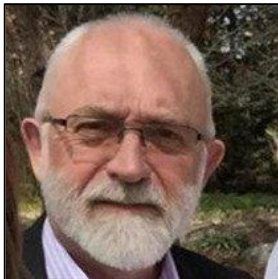
Terry Curtis & Dawson Curtis Obt.

Terry and Dawson Curtis, and Dawson's nanny Amanda Cole, lost their lives in the tornado early Tuesday. Family friend Parrish Burgess said Terry, 54, was a big man who some deemed as scary and intimidating, but he was actually a big teddy bear. She said he was "loving, humble and a great role model." Burgess said Dawson, 6, was "mean as a snake, but sweet as could be." Burgess describes Dawson as a boy who loved everyone he came across, and said people love him too. Amanda 34, was Dawson's nanny who lived with the Curtis family. Burgess said Amanda was an angel who also cared for his own children. She said Amanda was a wonder with children.

Robert Edward Dickson Obt.

b. 12 November 1951, Bristol, Sullivan Co., TN – d. 12 March 2020, Nashville, Davidson Co., TN, md **Susan Dotson**. Robert Edward Dickson, s/o **Lyle Lee Dickson & Hazel E. Vance**. Lyle Lee "Buddy" Dickson (1944-2019), is buried in Glenwood Cemetery and Chapel Mausoleum, Bristol, Sullivan Co., TN, brother of Robert Edward Dickson. Buddy Dickson's obt. states his parents are: Ester Lee and Hazel E. Vance Dickson.

Robert Dickson, 68 of Cookeville passed away Thursday, March 12, 2020 at **Vanderbilt University Medical Center from injuries sustained in the March 3rd tornado.**



He was born November 12, 1951 in Bristol, TN to the late Lyle Lee and Hazel Vance Dickson.

Following graduation from Tennessee High School in Bristol, he served his country for four years as a member of the United States Air Force. He worked as an LPN at Bristol Medical Center before moving to Cookeville in 2000 to work at Cookeville Regional Medical Center for McKesson Corporation.

He has been a member of Washington Avenue Baptist Church for many years, serving in the church's security detail.

Robert was a godly man with a happy and friendly nature. He was kind, generous and was always looking for ways to help others. He was an avid gun collector and enjoyed working in his yard.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Buddy Dickson and by a sister, Brenda Smith.

He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Susan Dotson Dickson; daughters, Dawne (Chris) Davis of Johnson City, Stefanie (Josh) Adkins of Asheville, NC and Haley Dickson of Cookeville; grandchildren, Callie Ingram, Rylie Davis, Kaleb Miller, Jameson Adkins and Bailee Adkins; and by a sister, Betty (Leonard) Bloomer of Blountville, TN

A private, family graveside service, with military honors, for Mr. Dickson will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at Cookeville City Cemetery. Bro. Mark Gaw will officiate.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 15 March 2020

Michael Dolfini & Albree Sexton

Michael Dolfini, 36, and Albree Sexton, 33, were fatally injured by debris near the intersection of McFerrin Avenue and Main Street around 1 a.m. Tuesday.

The couple had just left Attaboy Lounge, where Dolfini worked, Metro Nashville police confirmed.

The death toll across the state had risen to 25 people as of Thursday afternoon, according to the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency.

Dolfini and Sexton, who moved to Nashville together from California two years ago, lived in a duplex in East Nashville with their two cats, Poncho and Mellow.



Albree Sexton and Michael Dolfini (Photo: Submitted)

Their landlord, Pearl Sims, described them as “gentle good people. They were working hard. They were the best tenants, they took great care of the place and did some gardening. It is a huge loss for all of us who knew them,” she said.

“It’s such a shock. They had made Nashville home and were pursuing their dream to own a restaurant here. They both worked in restaurants trying to learn,” she said.

Sims said that both victims’ families were coming to Nashville this week to go through their personal effects at the duplex, which suffered no tornado damage. She said no funeral plans had been announced.

Sexton's father, Dennis Sexton, planned to visit her next month after he retired from working a difficult third-shift job. Although he hadn't seen her in a few years, the pair still kept in touch through phone calls and emails.

That won't happen, now.

"She was my daughter, there's really nothing more to say. She was great, she was beautiful, she was a go-getter," he said. "What else can a father say about his daughter?"

She stayed in touch, too, with her ex-husband David Nelson who lives in Chico, California.

"She was one of the happiest people I'd ever met. She always brightened those around her no matter what. She could take the darkest, most negative people and make them smile," Nelson said.

Albree Sexton was a professional bartender and ran a bar in Chico for approximately two years, Nelson said. She'd moved to Nashville to try her luck in a bigger city.

"She will be greatly missed in this town, she has many, many friends in Chico. She's a local minor celebrity," he said. "She leaves behind many people who mourn her."

Sexton worked at The Fox Bar and Cocktail Club, the restaurant confirmed.

James Monroe Eaton and Donna Yvonne (Mayfield) Eaton

b. 4 March 1935, Antioch, TN – d. 3 March 2020, Mt. Juliet, TN, md **Donna Yvonne (Mayfield) Eaton**, b. 4 November 1938, Southside, TN – d. 3 March 2020, Mt. Juliet, TN, d/o **William Mayfield & Thelma Jones**. James Monroe Eaton, s/o **Herbert Eaton & Susie Pearl Hartman**.

WILSON COUNTY, Tenn. — James and Donna Eaton died side by side on a mattress thrown from their bed.



"About as close as you can get," Mt. Juliet Police Department Capt. Tyler Chandler said.

A powerful tornado leveled the couple's home in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, an area hard hit by Tuesday morning's deadly storms.

The Eatons were married for 58 years. Jimmy Eaton, as he was known, would have celebrated his 85th birthday on Wednesday.

"The best earthly example of what a marriage should look like," said the couple's 24-year-old grandson Jake Hardy-Moore. "They showed Christ's love and his sacrifice. They both loved our families through challenging times of life.

"They were the ones we looked to when times were difficult, and they kept us pointed toward God and to be dependent on God."

The Eatons were members of First Baptist Church Mt. Juliet for more than 40 years and remained active until their deaths.

James Eaton often visited hospitals with Pastoral Care & Senior Adult Pastor David Fallin. He helped with a church coffee bar on Sundays.

James Monroe "Jim" Eaton & Donna Yvonne Mayfield Eaton passed away on March 3, 2020 at their home in Mt. Juliet, TN.

Mr. Eaton was born in Antioch, TN on March 4, 1935 to the late, Herbert and Susie Pearl Hartman Eaton. Mrs. Eaton was born on November 4, 1938 in Southside, TN to the late, William and Thelma Jones Mayfield.

They are survived by their 3 children; James Monroe "Monte" Eaton Jr. (Becky), Kristi Dawn Lane (Brian) and Mitchell Alan Eaton (Crystal McDonald); grandchildren, Derek Austin Hardy-Moore (Karen), Andrew "Drew" Hardy-Moore, Cara Dawn Smith and Jacob Aaron "Jake" Hardy Moore (Eva) as well as 9 great-grandchildren. Mr. Eaton is also survived by his siblings, Esther Mae Hand and Bobby Eaton. Mrs. Eaton is also survived by her siblings, Richard Mayfield, Debra Mayfield, Arnold Mayfield and Ronald Mayfield.

They were members of Edgefield Baptist Church in East Nashville for many years. When moving to Mt. Juliet in 1977 they joined First Baptist Church Mt. Juliet. Jim served as deacon and they both taught many Sunday school classes over the past 43 years.

Mr. Eaton was a story teller and jokester. Many times laughing at his own jokes before he could even finish them. His career was in the transportation industry but his love was his family. He enjoyed playing golf and was looking forward to the spring to get back on the course.

Mrs. Eaton was finance director at First Baptist Church Mt. Juliet. When she retired, she still volunteered at the church in any way she could.

Jim and Donna Eaton were married for over 57 years. They were a true example of God's love in their family, their marriage, the community of Mt. Juliet, and beyond. They were humble, kind and lived life fully. Whether they were on their daily walks, cheering on the Cincinnati Reds, Bunko or card night, church fellowship or supporting their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren through any activity they exemplified the love of God.

A gathering of family and friends will be held on Friday, March 6, 2020 from four o'clock in the afternoon until eight o'clock in the evening at Woodlawn-Roesch-Patton Funeral Home.

Celebration of Life services will be conducted by Bro. Billie Friel at two o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday, March 7, 2020 with a gathering beginning at noon at Green Hill Baptist Church, 13251 Lebanon Rd, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122.

Stephanie Dian Field & Harland Richard Marsh Obts.

b. 15 August 1983 – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, d/o **Gerald & Patricia Field**. Harland Richard Marsh, b. 2015 – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, s/o **Thomas Marsh & .**



Stephanie Dian Field, age 36, and her son, Harlan Richard Marsh, age 5, both of Cookeville, passed away early Tuesday morning, March 3, 2020 after a tornado hit their residence. Funeral services for both will be held Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 3 p.m. at Bilbrey Funeral Home in Crossville.

Burial will follow in Slate Springs Cemetery. Visitation will be held prior to the service from 1 until 3 p.m..

Survivors for Stephanie include her parents: Patricia and Gerald Field.

Survivors for Harlan include his father: Thomas Marsh; and grandparents: Patricia and Gerald Field.

Joshua Perry Kimberlin Obt.

b. 24 October 1989, Roanoke City, VA – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md **Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin**, b. 10 February 1991, Paintsville, Johnson Co., KY – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, d/o **Roney & Patricia Pitts**. Joshua Perry Kimberlin, s/o **Rob & Leanne Kimberlin**. (Joshua, Natalie & Sawyer Kimberlin all perished during the tornado that hit Putnam Co., TN, 3 March 2020).

*See Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin Obt.

*See Sawyer Noble Kimberlin Obt.

COOKEVILLE — Joshua Perry Kimberlin, 30 of Cookeville, Tennessee, passed from this life Tuesday, March 3, 2020, by the side of his wife, protecting her and his son, Sawyer.

Josh was born Tuesday, Oct. 24, 1989, in Roanoke, Virginia. He was the son of Rob and Leanne Kimberlin and Kim (Smith) and Bob Cantley.

Josh was a loving husband and father, son, brother and friend. He was an avid fisherman, kid at heart, was always making people laugh, and forever will be a Jedi. He was a devoted Christian most of all. Josh was a faithful member, teacher and brother in Christ at the Church of Christ at Colonial Heights. Josh was loved by everyone that knew him and he will be greatly missed.

Josh is survived by mother, Kim and Bob Cantley; father, Rob and Leanne Kimberlin; four siblings, Adam and Erin Kimberlin, Rebecca and Philip Cutler, Matthew and Katie Cantley, and Logan Kimberlin; and brothers-in-law, niece, nephews, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends.



Josh was preceded in death by his wife and son, Erin and Sawyer Kimberlin; paternal grandparents, Arlie and Dorothy Kimberlin; and maternal grandparents, Watty and Helen Ann Smith.

Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin, 29, of Cookeville, Tennessee, passed from this life Tuesday, March 3, 2020, by the side of her husband protecting their son, Sawyer.

Erin was born Sunday, Feb. 10, 1991, in Paintsville, Kentucky. She was the daughter of Rodney Bryan and Patricia Dawn (Lee) Pitts.

Erin was a loving wife and mother, daughter, sister and friend. She was a devoted Christian most of all. Erin was a faithful member, teacher, and sister in Christ at the Church of Christ at Colonial Heights. Erin was known for always having a plan and she planned and prepared for eternity with her Lord in heaven. She was loved by everyone that knew her and she will be greatly missed.

Erin is survived by parents, Rodney and Patricia Pitts; two brothers, Clint and Matt Pitts; mother and father-in-law, Bob and Kim Cantley; father and mother-in-law, Rob and Leanne Kimberlin; and brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, niece, nephews, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends.

Erin was preceded in death by husband and son, Josh and Sawyer Kimberlin; and maternal grandmother, Mary Louise Lee.

Sawyer Noble Kimberlin, 2, of Cookeville, Tennessee, passed from this life Tuesday, March 3, 2020, in the arms of his mom and dad, protected by both of them.

Sawyer was born Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2018, in Cookeville, Tennessee. He was the son of the late Josh Perry and Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin.

Sawyer was passionate about congregational singing, he even had his own podium, pitch pipe, microphone and songbook. His favorite hymn was Holy, Holy, Holy. He loved the moon, being outside, and was a Jedi like his father before him. Sawyer was loved by everyone that knew him, and he will be greatly missed.

Sawyer is survived by grandparents, Rob "Poppie" and Leanne "Mimi" Kimberlin, Bob "G-Pa" and Kim "G-Ma" Cantley, and Rodney "Mumps" and Patricia "Mammie" Pitts; and uncles, aunts, cousins, family and friends.

Sawyer was preceded in death by his parents, Josh and Erin Kimberlin.

Funeral services for Josh, Erin and Sawyer Kimberlin will be held Sunday, March 8, at 3 p.m. from the chapel of Crest Lawn Funeral Home with Brother Heath Phillips officiating. Interment will follow in the Crest Lawn Memorial Cemetery.

Visitation with the family will be held at Crest Lawn Funeral Home Saturday, March 7, from 3-6 p.m., and Sunday, March 8, from 1 p.m. until time of service at 3 p.m.

To sign the online guestbook and to send the family a message please visit www.crestlawnmemorial.com.

Arrangements entrusted to Crest Lawn Funeral Home, 526-6384.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 6 March 2020

(Alan Loftis (Mechanical Designer at ATC Automation) ATC Automation: It is with a heavy heart we are posting that our friend and co-worker, Josh Kimberlin, passed away in last night's storms, along with his wife Erin and son Sawyer. While we are mourning our loss here, heaven is rejoicing in their gain. Please continue to pray for their families.

Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin Obt.

b. 10 February 1991, Paintsville, Johnson Co., KY – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md Joshua Perry Kimberlin, b. 24 October 1989, Roanoke City, VA – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, s/o **Rob & Leanne Kimberlin**. Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin, d/o **Roney & Patricia Pitts**.

*See Joshua Perry Kimberlin Obt.

*See Sawyer Noble Kimberlin Obt.

Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin, 29 of Cookeville, Tennessee passed from this life on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, by the side of her husband protecting their son Sawyer.

Erin was born Sunday, February 10, 1991 in Paintsville, Kentucky and she was the daughter of Rodney Bryan and Patricia Dawn (Lee) Pitts.

Erin was a loving wife and mother, daughter, sister, and friend. She was a devoted Christian most of all. Erin was a faithful member, teacher, and sister in Christ at the Church of Christ at Colonial Heights. Erin was known for always having a plan and she planned and prepared for eternity with her Lord in heaven. She was loved by everyone that knew her and she will be greatly missed.

Erin is survived by, Parents, Rodney and Patricia Pitts; 2 Brothers, Clint and Matt Pitts; Mother and Father In Law, Bob and Kim Cantley; Father and Mother In Law, Rob and Leanne Kimberlin; Brothers in law, Sisters in law, Niece, Nephews, Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents and Friends.

Erin was preceded in death by, Husband and Son, Josh and Sawyer Kimberlin; Maternal Grandmother, Mary Louise Lee.

Funeral Services for Josh, Erin and Sawyer Kimberlin will be held Sunday, March 8, 2020 at 3:00 pm from the chapel of Crest Lawn Funeral Home with Brother Heath Phillips. Interment will follow in the Crest Lawn Memorial Cemetery.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 5 March 2020

Sawyer Noble Kimberlin Obt.

b. 27 February 2018, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN - d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, s/o **Joshua Perry Kimberlin** (1989-2020) & **Natalie Erin Pitts** (1991-2020). All perished during the tornado that hit Putnam Co., TN, 3 March 2020.

*See Joshua Perry Kimberlin Obt.

*See Natalie Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin Obt.

Sawyer Noble Kimberlin, 2, of Cookeville, Tennessee passed from this life on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, in the arms of his Mom and Dad, protected by both of them.

Sawyer was born Tuesday, February 27, 2018, in Cookeville, Tennessee, he was the son of the late Josh Perry and Erin (Pitts) Kimberlin.

Sawyer was passionate about congregational singing, he even had his own podium, pitch pipe, microphone, and songbook. His favorite hymn was Holy, Holy, Holy. He loved the moon, being outside, and was a Jedi like his father before him. Sawyer was loved by everyone that knew him, and he will be greatly missed.

Sawyer is survived by, Grandparents, Rob (Poppie) and Leanne (Mimi) Kimberlin, Bob (G-Pa) and Kim (G-Ma) Cantley, and Rodney (Mumps) and Patricia (Mammie) Pitts; Uncles, Aunts, Cousins, Family, and Friends.

Sawyer was preceded in death by his parents, Josh and Erin Kimberlin.

Funeral Services for Josh, Erin and Sawyer Kimberlin will be held Sunday, March 8, 2020, at 3:00 pm from the chapel of Crest Lawn Funeral Home with Brother Heath Phillips. Interment will follow in the Crest Lawn Memorial Cemetery.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 5 March 2020

Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler Obt.

b. 24 November 1965, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md on the 10th of May 1986, Jackson Co., TN to **Ricky Strong**. Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler also md 2017 to **Todd Koehler**, b. 28 July 1965 – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, s/o **Ken & Beverly Koehler**. Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler, d/o **James Elzo Beechboard & Alice Marie Spivey**.

*See Todd Koehler Obt.

(**Source:** Tennessee State Marriage record, Putnam Co., TN, pg. 184 – Ricky Stong married 10 May 1986, Jackson Co., TN, age 25 to Thelma Sue Beechboard, age 20, address: Gainesboro, TN. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of female: Elzo Beechborad, father, deceased. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of male: Mr. & Mrs. James Strong).

COOKEVILLE - Mrs. Thelma Sue Strong-Koehler, 54, of Cookeville, TN, passed away on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, with her husband, Todd Robert Koehler.

A memorial service for both will be held at 6 pm on Sunday, March 8, 2020, at the River Community Church at 1200 Miracle Road, Cookeville, TN.

The family will receive friends at the church on Sunday from 3 pm until time of the services.

She was born November 24, 1965, in Gainesboro, TN, to the late James Elzo Beechboard and Alice Marie Spivey Beechboard Hawkins. On September 16, 2017, she was married to Todd Robert Koehler. She worked at WalMart as a store manage, and was a member of Double Springs Church of Christ.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by one daughter, Natalie Strong, one brother, Billy Beechboard, and her step father, Doug Hawkins Sr.

Survivors include one son, Brock Dillon Strong of Tampa, Florida; one daughter, Olivia Ann Farley of Celina, Tennessee; one stepdaughter, Atha Amanda Stinson of Hermitage, Tennessee; two granddaughters, Emily Rhayne Stinson and Julia Rose Strong; one brother, Wayne Beechboard of Gainesboro, Tennessee; one stepbrother, Doug Hawkins Jr. of Cookeville; two sisters, Wanda Lowe of Livingston, Tennessee, and Jackie Beechboard of Gainesboro; and two stepsisters, Jennifer Brown and Jackie Hill, both of Cookeville.

Bro, Eric Collins will officiate at the services.

Anderson - Upper Cumberland Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, 931-268-1550.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 8 March 2020

Todd Koehler Obt.

b. 28 July 1965 – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md 2017 to **Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler**, b. 24 November 1965, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., d/o **James Elzo Beechboard & Alice Marie Spivey**. Todd Koehler, s/o **Ken & Beverly Koehler**,

*See Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler Obt.

COOKEVILLE — Todd Koehler, born July 28, 1965, was taken into Heaven holding his loving wife, Sue Strong Koehler, March 3, 2020.

He was survived by his parents, Ken and Beverly Koehler of Sheboygan, Wisconsin; loving sister, Trisha Gorman of Cookeville, Tennessee; loving brother, Tim Koehler and wife Nancy Koehler of Cookeville; loving sister, Teri Zarneke and husband, Rick Zarneke of Dallas, Georgia; loving brother, Jason Koehler and wife, Carrie Koehler of Madison, Indiana; and many nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts, relatives and friends.

Todd was a valued employee of Integral Automations for 22 years and Metcom Company for 13 years.

Todd, although he did not have any children, loved each of his nieces and nephews as his own. He enjoyed the outdoors while hiking, biking, repelling, hunting, boating and fishing on Center Hill Lake, in addition to photographing all of God's creation while he enjoyed it.

In his spare time, he was passionate about time spent with guy friends nicknamed, Bones, Dingleberry, Thrasher, Rat and Cobble, while they listened to rock music, cooked/barbecued and restored vintage automobiles. Todd was also passionate about his collection of firearms and teaching others how to respect them.

We as a family are reminded through Todd and Sue's departure from this earth into Heaven, what a tornado actually does to life and structure. We see the destruction to buildings and never realize what it does to those unprotected from the debris. Todd and Sue's life together was firmly grounded in the foundation of our Lord. We pray as a family that Todd and Sue's life continues to remind us daily to know God before we need him, rather than need him and not know him.

Todd adored not only his parents, family and close friends, but also his community. We would like to thank not only Cookeville but the entire country for the outreach and outpour of continuous prayers, compassion, concern and retrieval of numerous photos and belongings. Although everything Todd worked so hard at obtaining in material form was destroyed, we know that Todd's true love and happiness was found within his heart and also in the love he shared with his best friend and wife Sue.

Sometimes life just doesn't make sense. Bad things happen to good people and we all wonder why. But even in those moments, some things remain true — God loves you. He has a plan for your life, you are loved, you are never alone and even the darkest night must lead to dawn.

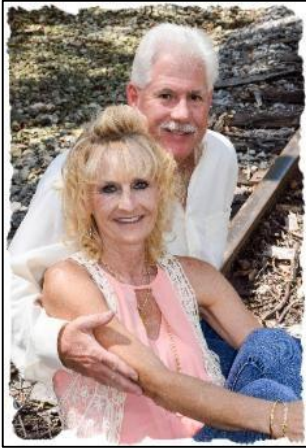
Joint memorial services will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday, March 8, at the River Community Church, 1200 Miracle Rd., Cookeville, TN. The family will receive friends Sunday at the church, from 3-6 p.m.

Anderson – Upper Cumberland Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements, 931- 268-1550.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 8 March 2020

Todd Koehler & Thelma Sue (Beechboard) Strong-Koehler

Danny Wilmoth had worked alongside Todd Koehler as a welder in Cookeville, Tenn., for 35 years. On Wednesday, a day after Koehler and his wife Sue Koehler were killed by a deadly tornado that swept through Putnam County, Wilmoth looked to where Koehler used to work and saw his toolbox, still sitting there.



"It's a little hard around here," Wilmoth said from inside Integral Automation Systems in Cookeville.

Wilmoth and Koehler rode motorcycles, caved and hiked together. They called each other out when they needed to and supported one another over the past four decades.

"Todd was like my little brother," Wilmoth said.

The Koehlers, both in their 50s, were among 25 Middle Tennesseans killed early Tuesday morning as two tornadoes plowed through five counties with winds reaching 175 miles per hour. In Putnam County, the tornado killed 18 people in the early morning hours while most people were sleeping.

Jerry Greer, owner of Integral Automation, hired Koehler as a welder 22 years ago, bringing him on near the same time as Wilmoth.

"He worked hard," Greer said, adding Koehler showed up every day at 6 a.m.. "He was very good."

Wilmoth recalled Koehler telling him about his plans to meet Sue Koehler for the first time at a Mexican restaurant in Cookeville and how quickly they connected and began dating. They had a small wedding about a decade later, in 2017, at a church in Jackson.

"You couldn't wipe the smile off Todd's face," Wilmoth said.

Sue Koehler, a mother of two, was a manager of a Walmart in Algood, Tenn., where store employees described her as an inspiring, wonderful woman, who was willing to coach others in their jobs. She had started as a cashier at a Walmart in Cookeville after working as a beautician and worked her way up, Wilmoth said.

Todd was the second of five children and his family moved to Tennessee from Wisconsin in 1978, said his older sister Trisha Gorman.

She described him as a hard worker, who was dedicated to his job, to his parents, to Sue's children and to his adoring nieces and nephews. More than anything, he was dedicated to Sue, she said.

"He loved that girl so much," Gorman said. "For 12 years, he wanted to marry her."

Koehler would take his nieces and nephews on horseback and four-wheeler rides. He brought Trisha on repelling and hiking trips on weekends, sharing his love for the outdoors with his family members. They would tease him for his quirky insights on nature, such as how to remove the bitterness from coffee or the homeopathic tricks he had for illnesses.

"We joked, if you went on 'Survivor' you would win," Gorman said, who lives in Cookeville.

Wilmoth said after "cutting up all day long" with Todd as they worked on Monday, he watched Koehler drive out of the parking lot that evening.

Tuesday morning, a friend called to tell him the Koehler's home had been damaged. He called Todd and texted him but got no answer. Wilmoth drove to their house, hoping it was just a cell tower issue. But the house was "completely gone."

Todd's brother confirmed Wilmoth's fears later that day.

Based on the damages, it appears as if the tornado went right through the Koehler's bedroom, Gorman said.

She said it has given her a sense of peace, "knowing that he died with his best friend, with no pain."

Wilmoth said Todd Koehler had loved taking photographs and was always documenting their outdoor adventures. Several of his photographs have been discovered this week miles away from their home, and those who find them are trying to return them to his family. Wilmoth said he sees it as Todd's way of sharing his pictures with others now that he is gone.

"Everybody else can enjoy them now," Wilmoth said.

A service for the Koehlers will be held Sunday at 6 p.m. at the River Community Church in Cookeville.

The Tennessean 06 Mar 2020:

Patricia Ann (Hooten) Lane Obt.

b. 21 November 1952, Jackson Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md on the 26th of October 1968, Jackson Co., TN to **Thurman Junior Lane**. Patricia Ann (Hooten) Lane, d/o **Norman Doyle “Cotton” Hooten** (1925-2004) & **Ella Lou “Ellie” Mee** (1928-2011), both buried in Dodson Branch Cemetery, Dodson Branch, Jackson Co., TN.

(Source: Tennessee State Marriage record, Jackson Co., TN, pg. 165 – Thuman Lane married 26 October 1968, Jackson Co., TN, age 20, address: Rt. 3, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN to Patricia Ann Hooten, age 15, address: Rt. 2, Whitleyville, TN. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of female: Mr. & Mrs. Norman Hooten, parents, Rt. 2, Whitleyville, TN. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of male: Mr. & Mrs. Thurman Lane, Rt. 3, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN).

COOKEVILLE - Funeral services for Patricia Ann Lane, age 67, of Cookeville, will be Tuesday March 10 at 1:00 pm in the Cookeville Chapel of Hooper Huddleston and Horner Funeral Home. Bro. John Nichols will officiate.

Her family will receive friends Monday from 4 - 8 p.m. and again Tuesday from 11 a.m. until time of services.

Patricia passed away suddenly from injuries she received during storms early Tuesday morning March 3, 2020 in Cookeville.

She was born November 21, 1952 in Jackson County, TN to the late Norman and Ellie Mea Hooten.



Patricia was an active member of Collegeside Church of Christ.

She is survived by her daughter, Traci Delk (Mitchell) of Hendersonville, TN; son, David Lane (Paulette Wallace) of Cookeville; grandchildren, Maddison Lane, Darrin Lane (fiance, Rachel Liedel, Danielle Dales, Xander Delk, and Tiffany Wallace.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death three brothers, Jimmy, Joe, and Frank Hooten; and sister, Patty Hooten.

Bro. John Nichols will officiate at the services.

Hooper Huddleston & Horner Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: March 6, 2020

Bridgette Ann-Marie McCormick Obt.

b. 17 August 2008, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN – d. 4 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, d/o **Michael McCormick & Billi-Jo Hutson**. Bridgette Ann-Marie McCormick is buried in Frasers Chapel Cemetery, White Co., TN.
(Tornado victim)

COOKEVILLE - Bridgett Ann-Marie McCormick, age 13, went to be with the Lord in the early morning hours of March 4, 2020 in Cookeville, Tennessee.



Bridgett was born in Cookeville, Tennessee to Billi-Jo Hutson and Micheal McCormick on August 17, 2006.

Described by her beloved brother, Ethan, Bridgett was in one word, a “mess”. She was all over the place, all the time. She always had a smile on her face, but was never afraid to lay down the law. She was always doing Tik Toks and eating. She was so goofy, and the sweetest, most caring, bossy, young lady, ever. She loved her friends; Charity, Tim, Zoey, Shelby, Rhiana, Charles, K.J., Aiden, Kyle, Kayla, Jett, Jaycee, and especially her very special friends, Mike and Kim Phillips.

Bridgett is preceded in death by her grandfather, John Shiferdek; Aunts, Brittany Grooverd and Melinda McCormick; and uncle, Justin McCormick.

She is survived by her mother, Billi-Jo Hutson; Father, Micheal McCormick; Brother, Ethan McCormick; Sister, Kaitlin McCormick; Grandmothers, Teresa Shiferdek and Sally McCormick; Countless Aunts and Uncles; Several cousins; and many friends – All who loved her dearly.

Arrangements:

The family will accept visitors on Monday, March 9, 2020 from 4:00PM until 8:00PM in the chapel of Thurman Funeral Home in Sparta, Tennessee.

The family will also accept visitors on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM at Sycamore Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee.

Funeral Service will begin at Sycamore Church of Christ on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 2:00PM.

Interment at Fraziers Chapel Cemetery.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 8 March 2020

Leisha Elizabeth (Gaskins) Rittenberry Obt.

b. 26 November 1991 – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

Leisha Elizabeth Rittenberry, age 28, went to heaven to be with the angels March 3, 2020.

She was born to Melissa Ray and Doug Gaskin on November 26, 1991.

Liz graduated from Monterey High School, class of 2011. She was a customer service rep at Speedway of Lebanon for two years. She will be missed by the regulars at Speedway.

Liz had a huge heart and would give the shirt off her back to anyone in need. She never knew a stranger

and was loved by anyone who met her. Liz loved listening to music, making videos on TikTok, singing karaoke and spending time with her friends and family.

She is survived by her loving fiancé of three years, Jon Letts; mother Melissa Ray; father Doug Gaskin; brother Jesse Gaskin; grandmother Patricia Klatt; aunt Levonne Macomson; aunt Natalie Bowen; cousins Courtney Bowen, Bradley Bowen, Kathleen Bucey, Kevin Cornett, Susan Cornett, Mandy Peterson; aunt Kathy; aunt Betsy; God son Dominic Rittenberry; mother-in-law Jessica Cline and numerous other family and friends.



Liz was preceded in death by her grandpa Arlo L Peterson; grandpa Lloyd Klatt; grandpa Jesse Gaskin; grandma Bobbie Gaskin; uncle Russ Peterson; uncle Patrick Klatt and cousin Timmy Cornett.

A celebration of life will take place at Presley Funeral Home on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 from 2pm-6pm.

Cathy Gail (Redmond) Selby Obt.

b. 18 July 1956, Rome, GA – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md on the 26th of May 1978, Putnam Co., TN to **Charles Keith Selby**, b. 10 February 1955, Sparta, White Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, **Johnnie Lee Selby & Dorothy Randolph**. Cathy Gail (Redmond) Selby **Charles Evan Redmond** (1929-2015) & **Sarah Gaynell**, b. 23 Feb. 1933, both buried in Double Springs Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. (Charles & Cathy Selby died during the tornado on 3 March 2020 that killed 18 people in Putnam Co., TN).

*See Charles Evan Redmond Obt.

*See Charles Keith Selby Obt.

(**Source:** Tennessee State Marriage record, Putnam Co., TN, pg. 503 – Charles Keith Selby married 28 May 1978, Putnam Co., TN, age 23, b. 10 February 1955, address: Rt. 8, Sparta, TN to Cathy Gail Redmond, age 21, b. 18 July 1956, address: Rt. 2, Cookeville, TN. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of female: Mr. & Mrs. Charles Redmond, Rt. 2, Cookeville, TN).

Cathy Gail Redmond Selby, 63, of Cookeville Tennessee passed away March 3, 2020.

Cathy was born in Rome, Georgia, on July 18, 1956, and was the wife of Charles Keith Selby.

Cathy is survived by:

Sons: Brian Keith Selby and wife Rebekah

Travis Lynn Selby

Mother: Sarah Gaynell Redmond

Brothers: Charles Edward Redmond, Arthur Larry Redmond, James Lamar Redmond, Mark Randall Redmond, Bobby Joe Redmond

Grandchildren: Chloe Selby, Landon Selby, Liam Selby, Luke Selby, Rose Selby, Rachel Yost, Ryleigh Yost

Cathy is preceded in death by her father, Charles Redmond, and brother, Steve Redmond.

Funeral Services for Keith and Cathy Selby, will be held Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 1:00 pm from the chapel of Crest Lawn Funeral Home with Bro. Harold Walker officiating. Burial will follow in the Double Springs Cemetery.

Visitation with the family will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2020, from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm and again, Wednesday, March 11, 2020, from 11:00 am until time of service at Crest Lawn Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions for funeral and medical expenses to be made to the Selby Funeral and Medical Expense Fund at any branch of the Bank of Putnam County.

Arrangements entrusted to Crest Lawn Funeral Home, 526-6384.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 8 March 2020

Charles Keith Selby Obt.

b. 10 February 1955, Sparta, White Co., TN – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md on the 26th of May 1978, Putnam Co., TN to **Cathy Gail (Redmond) Selby**, b. 18 July 1956 – d. 3 March 2020, d/o **Charles Evan Redmond** (1929-2015) & **Sarah Gaynell**, b. 23 Feb. 1933, both buried in Double Springs Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. Charles Keith Selby, s/o **Johnnie Lee Selby & Dorothy Randolph**. (Charles & Cathy Selby died during the tornado on 3 March 2020 that killed 18 people in Putnam Co., TN).

(**Source:** Tennessee State Marriage record, Putnam Co., TN, pg. 503 – Charles Keith Selby married 28 May 1978, Putnam Co., TN, age 23, b. 10 February 1955, address: Rt. 8, Sparta, TN to Cathy Gail Redmond, age 21, b. 18 July 1956, address: Rt. 2, Cookeville, TN. Name of parent, guardian or next of kin of female: Mr. & Mrs. Charles Redmond, Rt. 2, Cookeville, TN).

COOKEVILLE - Charles Keith Selby, 65, of Cookeville Tennessee passed away March 3, 2020.

Keith was born in Sparta, Tennessee, on February 10, 1955, and was the husband of Cathy Redmond Selby.



Keith is survived by:

Sons: Brian Keith Selby and wife Rebekah

Travis Lynn Selby

Sisters: Sue Selby Carmichael

Karen Renee Selby Fiste

Brothers: Ronald Lynn Selby

Grandchildren: Chloe Selby, Landon Selby, Liam Selby, Luke Selby, Rose Selby, Rachel Yost, Ryleigh Yost

Keith is preceded in death by his parents, Johnnie Lee and Dorothy Randolph Selby.

Funeral Services for Keith and Cathy Selby, will be held Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 1:00 pm from the chapel of Crest Lawn Funeral Home with Bro. Harold Walker officiating.

Burial will follow in the Double Springs Cemetery.

Visitation with the family will be held Tuesday, March 10, 2020, from 4:00 pm until 8:00 pm and again, Wednesday, March 11, 2020, from 11:00 am until time of service at Crest Lawn Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions for funeral and medical expenses to be made to the Selby Funeral and Medical Expense Fund at any branch of the Bank of Putnam County.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 8 March 2020

Jamie (Loff) Smith Obt.

b. 23 August 1983, Colville, Stevens Co., WA – d. 3 March 2020, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN, md **Gary Russell Smith**. Jamie (Loff) Smith, d/o **Kenneth & Marleen Loff**.



SPARTA - Jamie Loff Smith, 36, of Cookeville, TN passed away Tuesday, March 3, 2020 in Cookeville, TN. She was born on August 23, 1983 in Colville, Washington to Kenneth and Marleen Loff. She was preceded in death by her brother, John C. Loff. She is survived by her son, Logan Smith and his father, Gary Russell Smith. Parents, Kenneth and Marleen Loff. Brothers, Robert Loff (Kristy), Joseph Loff. Nephews, Robert Jr. and Brayden Loff. Many loving aunts, uncles, cousins and dear friends. The Family will receive friends on Saturday, March 7,

2020 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Oak Lawn Funeral Home, with prayer by Father John Patrick given at 3 p.m. Online condolences may be made to the family at oaklawnmemorial.com

Oak Lawn Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN 8 March 2020

*Read more about the people and places in Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

WILDCATS WIN REGION! Host sectionals. B1

Herald-Citizen

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020 | COOKEVILLE, TENNESSEE 118TH YEAR | NO. 47 75 CENTS

We Remember

March 3, 2020



Leisha Rittenberry, 28, moved to Cookeville with her mother when her parents separated. Friends and family described her as a fun person who had "a beautiful heart." Her aunt, Betty Gaskin Lester, said, "She was funny and had an infectious laugh. She always tried to please."



Sue, 54, and Todd Koehler were married in 2017. Sue was the manager of the Algood Walmart. "She touched the lives of not only her store, but of other stores in the region," Tammy Hordea, manager of the Sparta Walmart, said. Todd worked for Integral Automation Systems, a company with about 10 employees. "We're not going to be able to replace him," coworker Jeanie White said. "He was wonderful."



Josh, 30, Erin, 28, and their son Sawyer Kimberlin were a family surrounded by their faith. "Erin was a carbon copy of her mother and that was a good thing," said Rodney Pitts, Erin's Father. "She was stubborn as a mule about what the Lord wanted her to do." Josh served as her perfect foil. "His room said he never had a plan, he just went. He was so laidback. They were good together," Pitts said. Their son, Sawyer had just turned 2, and Erin's plan and Josh's spirit was to raise him to be one surrounded by faith.



Jessica Clark, 30, touched many lives. She worked for the City of Cookeville, was active in her church, and was the secretary of the Putnam County Fair Board. "She called me a lot, always asking for things to help the fair," Rep. Ryan Williams said. "I'm going to miss her calls, she was a great advocate for the county and the fair."



Hattie Collins: A was the daughter of Matt and Mary





TORNADO RECOVERY CONTINUES FOR PUTNAM COUNTY FAMILIES

John Darrell and Faye Davis sit on their front porch Thursday for a break from repairing their tornado-damaged home.

Paige Stanage | Herald-Citizen

Posted Thursday, March 26, 2020

By Paige Stanage

Volunteers and families were able to accomplish a lot of work in the tornado-devastated areas of Putnam County with the warm, sunny weather Thursday.



One of those was the Davis family.

John and Faye Davis have lived in their home on South Drive for the past eight years. The house has been in their family for 46 years, Faye said.

“We like it here,” said Faye. “It’s a good neighborhood with wonderful neighbors.”

Their home was among hundreds hit by the tornado March 3. Family members and volunteers have already put a new roof on the house, replaced all of the ceilings, except in the living room on the back side,

and replaced some of the windows and all of the siding.

“We’re getting a lot done today because of the weather. We’re just so grateful for this sunshine,” she said. “Today (Thursday), we’re actually going to be putting the carpet down in the bedrooms today and working on the laundry room. We’re going to actually be moving our bedroom back upstairs.”

John and Faye had been using a part of their living room as a bedroom. They also had access to one of their smaller bathrooms.

There are boxes everywhere in the home, said Faye.

“We have had a lot of good volunteers,” she said. “I just can’t get over the kindness and compassion of people. I mean, we had people coming by here who didn’t know us and asked if we wanted to stay with them at their own homes. “Out of necessity, we had to stay here because we had to keep the basement spring water pumped out.”

Preventing their basement from flooding was also what they were doing March 3.

“(John) Darrell and I were outside when the power had gone off because we were trying to start the generator back there in the back side of the house because it would’ve flooded in the basement if we hadn’t,” Faye said. “We were out there, and Darrell said to me, ‘There’s something wrong. We’ve got to get back into the house.’”

“So he had a hold of my rope, pulled me back inside, and we barely made it back in. We barely remember closing the door when it started hitting. (John) Darrell said it was like a truck load of rocks hitting the house. To me, it sounded like a bowling alley. But then all at once, it was gone.”

John said it lasted about 15 seconds.

"I've always loved thunderstorms. They never bothered me before," Faye said. "I think I'll probably feel differently from now on."

TORNADO MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTION HALTED

HERALD-CITIZEN STAFF REPORTS

The Herald-Citizen has cancelled Friday's drive-thru distribution of its keepsake tornado fundraiser, NIGHTMARE: March 3, 2020, in the wake of Gov. Bill Lee's shelter-in-place order Thursday afternoon.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to schedule additional drive-thru distribution opportunities later this month," said Publisher Jack McNeely. The Shelter-in-place order is in effect through April 14.

The magazine may be ordered by calling the newspaper office at 931-526-9715.

"If you have already ordered a book or plan to call in an order, you may also pay additional postage and we'll mail the book to you," McNeely explained. Cost is \$10 per book. All proceeds are earmarked for the Cookeville-Putnam County Tornado Relief Fund.

All pre-purchased books not picked up through Thursday will be held for distribution either by mail or for pick-up at a later date. More than 3,500 copies of the book have been distributed, therefore, only a limited number are available to be purchased.

Gov. Lee's order will not affect the daily publication and delivery of the Herald-Citizen since it provides an essential service to the community.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 2 April 2020

'I'M AFRAID TO CLOSE MY EYES SOME NIGHTS'

By Paige Stanage | Herald-Citizen

It's been one month since the Super Tuesday tornadoes touched down in Middle Tennessee, and some residents are still reeling in its wake.

Jason Burton is one of those residents. He lives on Mockinghill Circle in a brick house with his 19 year old daughter.

"I know when all the work is done and things get quiet, I'm going to need counseling," Burton said.

"Right now, my mind is just so focused on getting things taken care of and done that it's kind of keeping my mind off of it. But sleeping has been hard. Friday night with the storms, I had nightmares. I'm afraid to close my eyes some nights."



Jason Burton said so many people have stopped by to take a photo of the tattered American flag in his yard. He said it's also the flag featured in Jake Hoot's "Tennessee Strong" music video.

In the early morning hours of March 3, Burton, Roy Hall (his friend, boss and

landlord) and Hall's son were coming back from a concert in Nashville.

The trio first stopped at Roy's house where Burton's vehicle was parked, and he drove home from there.

"I got home, sat down, got me something to drink and something to eat," he said. " And I finally got ready to go to bed, and no sooner did I lay down and close my eyes, all of a sudden there was a train coming through my wall before the (smartphone) alarm went off warning me."

He had little time to get up, grab his daughter, and hunker down in the safest spot in the house — the kitchen.

"I heard the tornado, knew what it was, jumped up, basically broke my bedroom door down to get to my daughter, and we went to the corner of the living room and I covered her up, and then went to the kitchen," he said. "She was screaming. She was scared and I was scared, too. The whole house was shaking, you could hear metal getting ripped up from everywhere. Then it just stopped."

Burton waited a little bit before opening the door. He said there was a sunroom on the side and part of the front of the house, and a carport.

"When I opened the door, the first thing I saw through my window was the carport had collapsed onto my truck and her car, and the windows were blown out," Burton said. "When I walked down the steps and looked to the right, the whole front wall of my sunroom was blown out and then I saw my neighbor's house, Stephanie (Field) and her little boy, Harlan (Marsh), double apartments were completely gone. No debris or nothing. All of the other houses were just torn to pieces."

Burton called Hall to warn him because he didn't know where the tornado came from or where it was headed.

Hall tried to drive to Burton's house, but he had to park at the Double Springs Utility District and walk because of all the downed trees and damage.

"And as we're getting ready to walk just to get to his house, we see a tarp blow off down there at the church and the fire trucks," Burton said. "There was already a body laying there in the church parking lot. Luckily my daughter didn't see that. But that's how bad it was that night."

Piling up the debris is another trauma for folks who survived it.

"I think it looks worse now that it's all cleaned up because now you can see how many homes are actually gone," he said. "They all bulldozed them down. It's hard to come to terms with how people's lives are just everywhere and then thrown into the dumpsters, you know?"

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 4 April 2020

COUNTY BUILDING PERMITS PROVIDE 'BRIGHT SPOT'

By Jim Herrin

In spite of the global pandemic and the effects of a tornado that hit Putnam County last month, Mayor Randy Porter said the amount of construction underway in the county during March provided "a bright spot."

"We had 37 building permits for almost \$5 million, with 16 new homes," he said. "None of the new home permits had anything to do with the tornado, but six of the miscellaneous permits were for repairs to some of those homes."

Porter said the 37 permits amounted to "the highest level of construction, as far as dollar wise, since March 2019."

"For the fiscal year (nine months) since July 2019, that's 225 permits for \$30.6 million with 131 of those being new single family residential," he said. "Unsure of what April will look like with the tornado and COVID-19. We'll just have to wait and see."

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 4 April 2020

HENSLY DRIVE NEIGHBORHOOD CARED FOR FAMILY

AFTER TORNADO

By Paige Stanage

The Hensley Drive neighborhood was special and incredible.

That's what many of its former residents are saying, including the Asante family, about the little residential road ending in a cul-de-sac.



The Asante family includes Tennessee Tech earth science professor, Joseph Asante, his wife and TTU nursing student, Joyce Darko, and their three children, Nana, 15, Yaa, 10 and Yaw, 7.

The Asantes family pose for a portrait in their former home on Hensley Drive. From left are Joseph Asantes, Joyce Darko, and their children, Yaw, Yaa and Nana.

They are all healing from the night of the March 3 tornado.

"We just now moved into our new temporary home," Joyce said. "I haven't been able to do much because I'm still on crutches."

Darko suffered a degloving injury from her right ankle down to her toes and a broken fibula, both sustained in the tornado.

"The doctor said I was lucky to have all my skin back (on my foot) to have the surgery to repair it," she said. "Then my fibula bone was also broken. They had to put a pin in to stabilize a bone that size. It was my right leg."

“Joseph had a right leg Achilles tendon injury. He has to have surgery on that. Yaw had a small cut on his head, and the hospital took a look at it and said it was fine. His wound is already gone. Yaa had a patch on her left leg and foot. They didn’t do anything to it except cover it and it’s almost gone. She also had a cut that’s also healed. Nana is still dressing his wound. He had a cut in between the knee all the way back to the calf. He went to the Wound Care Center Thursday and they said it’s fine and to come back in two weeks.”

All three children are also receiving counseling to help cope with the trauma from that night.

"They are all coping in their own ways," Darko said. "They are on their way (to healing)."

The Asantes moved to the Hensley Drive neighborhood in 2018. They were taken care of by their neighbors and community members the night of the tornado.

“I had gone to bed around 11 that night,” Darko said. “It was Monday night, so I didn’t have any classes to go to on Tuesday, but the kids had school in the morning. So I went to bed early to have a good rest before I took the kids to school.

“Nana goes to Cookeville High School. The two little ones attend Sycamore Elementary.”

Darko said Joseph went to bed earlier that night.

“He woke up at 1:48 a.m. and said to me, ‘Joyce, I just got a notification on my phone that a tornado is going to hit this area from now until 2:15,’” she said.

That notification gave the parents enough time to get the kids downstairs into the half bathroom, the safest room in the house.

“I was the last person in,” Darko said. “And the minute I got into there, I held the door knob, trying to close the door, and all of a sudden, I felt... Then it ended. I did not hear anything, I did not see anything. I don’t know how many minutes or seconds it lasted.”

The tornado picked their home up from its foundation and moved it two houses down, Darko said.

“My husband found us by calling out our names and everybody responding,” Darko said. “We found ourselves lying somewhere on the debris. Nana was lying close to me. He pulled something off of himself and got up, and my husband got up.

“So we all got up but I felt like I couldn’t walk. My husband said he couldn’t either.”

The family spotted car lights and started calling for help. Nana found a flashlight and started shining it to see where they had landed.

The children, with Nana leading the way, were told to go and find help because their parents couldn’t walk.

After they found help for their parents, the children were told to go seek shelter at one of the few houses left standing.

“My husband and I had to crawl on debris to get to either our driveway or the roadside, I couldn’t tell,” Darko said.

Asantes and Darko found Luke Carty, who was driving his newly-purchased truck and searching for the injured.

Carty said those who were uninjured did what they could to help.

“Those who were healthy in the neighborhood began looking for injured, helping those injured to any houses that still stood, tending to wounds, and just scrambling to help those we love,” Carty said. “My truck was still drivable, so I began to transport as many injured as possible to the ambulances who couldn't get into our area.”

Carty drove to about three different places trying to find a way out, but debris was everywhere.

“He finally had to force his truck several times over a tree to get us somewhere,” Darko said. “We didn’t know where.”

The husband and wife were taken to a house where healthy neighbors were tending to the injured.

“They gave us blankets to keep us warm, because we were cold from the rain,” Darko said. “They took care of us before the ambulances got there.”

The support didn’t stop that night. It kept pouring in from neighbors, friends and the community.

“Peggy Semmes and her husband, Paul, took us in after we left the hospital on Wednesday, I think,” Darko said. “The night of (the tornado), our neighbor, Lauren Farmer, helped me get into the (Carty’s) truck. So many people were helping and supportive.”

Nana’s friend from Cookeville High, Cayden Webb, took him and his siblings in for a few days before they were reunited with the parents at the Semmes residence.

“We’re just so grateful and thankful to all who helped us,” Darko said. “From all the churches, teachers and community members...there’s no way to name them and thank them all.”

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 12 April 2020

HC PRESENTS \$25,000 TO TORNADO RELIEF FUND

Herald-Citizen managing editor Lindsay McReynolds, publisher Jack McNeely and news editor Don Foy present a \$25,000 check to Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton, left, and Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter, right, to the Cookeville Putnam County Tornado Relief Fund. The \$25,000 check came from the sale of the Nightmare magazine about the March 3 tornado. A limited number of copies are available at the Herald-Citizen at 1300 Neal Street.



Paige Stanage | Herald-Citizen

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 4 May 2020

MIRACLE BABY

2-year-old thrives after severe head injury in tornado

By Don Foy

Miracle is a word that's thrown around a lot these days.

But it's the only word that describes 2-year-old Harper Mynatt's recovery from a severe head injury sustained in a tornado.



Chad and Jill Mynatt, daughter Harper and infant son Major, lived on Hensley Drive, one of the hardest hit areas when an EF-4 tornado ripped across western Cookeville just before 2 a.m. March 3.

"There's no way to explain it medically," Harper's mother, Jill Mynatt said. "We had a lot of doctors talk to us about this from a medical standpoint.

One told us she was a doctor, but not THE doctor (a reference to Jesus as the great physician).

(Chad, Major, Harper and Jill Mynatt)

"We're grateful she is healed," Jill said. "We know it was a miracle. We know how she was healed, we just don't know why. We want to point to God, to praise him for healing and to make sure his story is told."

The Mynatts' story is like many others the night of the tornado.

"When the warning went off, it was raining," Chad said. "I went outside, and there was some hail in the rain.

"We decided to go get the babies, and as we were running toward our mudroom, the power went out. So we sat down where we were, and 15 seconds later, it hit."

When it was over, they were only about 15 feet apart, but struggled to find each other. Neither see well without their glasses, and those were missing. Chad was holding Harper; Jill was holding Major. Jill was trapped in what used to be the floor and badly bruised. Chad was also bruised and beat up. Major was largely unhurt, suffering only two minor scrapes on his head.

Harper suffered a heavy blow to the right-front portion of her head. They would find out later the skull was shattered.

Chad freed Jill, and they headed across the street to where they could see Matt Suggs' house was still standing. They met Will Francis, who was trying to get his car out to take injured to the hospital. Francis was unable to free his car, but Luke Carty was able to get his truck far enough to take the injured, including Harper, to Darrell and Amy Jennings' house on North McBroom Chapel Road.

Amy led the Mynatts to the McBroom Chapel Church of Christ building, the closest ambulances could get to the disaster scene because of the debris.

"We walked across the debris to the church," Jill said. "When we got to the ambulance, they started working on Harper. She never stopped breathing, and her heart never stopped."

Chad stayed with Harper, and around 6:30 a.m., he went with her as she was taken to UT Medical Center in Knoxville. When they arrived, Harper was diagnosed with a depressed skull fracture. She was immediately taken to surgery, where they pieced her skull back together and inserted a platinum plate.

At the same time, Chad began to feel the effects of his injuries and was admitted to the hospital as well.

All this time, Chad and Jill were unable to communicate. Neither had cell phones with them. Jill had been treated at Cookeville Regional Medical Center and discharged. She and Major left Cookeville with Jill's mother and father. Chad's mother and father were with him in Knoxville.

Jill and Major finally met up with Chad as Harper was being transferred to East Tennessee Children's Hospital.

"Harper's injuries were severe," Chad said. "But there was so much they didn't know. They did their best to not give us false hope, but relay that it was not hopeless, either."

And it wasn't hopeless.

As the doctors slowly brought Harper out of a drug-induced coma, her personality started to emerge.

"She knew who we were," Jill said. "About three weeks after the tornado, they took her breathing tube out, and we were finally able to hold her. We showed her pictures, and she knew who the people in the pictures were."

April 24, 53 days after she was injured in the tornado, Harper was discharged from a physical therapy center in Knoxville and came home to Cookeville, where friends and family and well wishers gave her a welcome home parade.

"The folks at Children's Hospital treated us so well," Jill said. "They were terrific."

And Harper, who turned 2 the day after the tornado, is doing well.

"Unless you're a professional like a therapist, and you couldn't see the big scar on her forehead, you probably wouldn't know anything had happened," Chad said.

As for the prayers and support from Cookeville, Jill summed it up:

"It wasn't just our neighbors and our church family," she said. "We had complete strangers wanting to help us. The Fentress County ambulance crew who drove Chad and Harper to Knoxville have contacted us to see how she's doing."

"I've always loved Cookeville, but even more now."

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 16 May 2020

*Read more about the people and places in Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>