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The Holyoke Enterprise

Huge trees were uprooted, airport hangars blew away, buildings were leveled, a semi overturned, and much of the town lost power Monday evening, April 8, when a spring storm roared into Holyoke, Colo.

Reports Tuesday morning indicated no injuries in the barrage of bad weather, which can be counted as a huge positive in the aftermath of the storm.

Power was restored in most of the area by midnight, but the wind continued to howl and snow flurries flew.

School was canceled Tuesday in Holyoke School District Re-1J, as the storm continued to blow and gust during the day.

Throughout the day Monday, a big storm was predicted, but it was hard to fathom as the 74-degree temps and sunshine made it feel like a nice, spring day.

Winds around 15-20 mph Monday afternoon increased to 30 mph with rain by 7 p.m. The storm was brewing.

Hail pounded and the wind speed escalated. At 8:15 p.m., the siren blew, summoning Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department. Fire Chief Phil Wirges reported there were no actual fires, but the VFD responded to eight back-to-back calls at that time.

About that same time, the power went out in much of Holyoke, and strange tornado-like action wreaked havoc across the area. Residents reported flying pivot tanks, flying trampolines and more.

Winds were out of the north-northeast, but some fluke stories indicated objects blew from the south.

Phillips County Sheriff Rob Urbach said a couple of people reported seeing a tornado touch down on County Road 41 just east of Holyoke.

A mile east of the stoplight, then south on County Road 41, a 60-foot-by-120-foot storage shed, owned by Joe and Kelly Schram and David and Alicia Schram, was completely destroyed.

The 3-year-old shed housed a big drill and combine, a planter cornhead and more that were ruined.

Tuesday morning, David quickly responded, "Everything out there is replaceable." He was thankful there were no injuries. Anticipating the predicted hail storm, David said they brought much of that equipment in to storage Monday. It probably would have been better off in the field.

Storage units owned by Rusty and Sandy Triplette right next to the Schram building completely blew away, leaving the contents scattered.

At the Holyoke airport southeast of town, three hangars were destroyed, and Phil Biersdorfer's plane was turned upside down. The storm took the hangar housing Biersdorfer's plane, as well as Kenny Heermann's hangar next to it, skipped the next one and then got Mike Smith's hangar.

At the mobile home park west of the airport, a trailer lost a porch, several lost roofs, and debris

was flying all over.

South of the mobile home park, the Jason Frost place lost a chicken coop. Another mile south of that, a pivot overturned.

Ag Power Equipment Co. northeast of town lost one of its parts sheds located west of the main building. Manager Curt Parker said the parts shed was destroyed, and all three pickups inside were damaged. Something from that building blew into the main store structure, causing further damage.

Parker added that several tractors on their lot lost windshields in the storm.

A semi overturned one mile south of the stoplight in Holyoke, and huge trees were uprooted in both the cemetery (located south of the airport) and Holyoke Golf Course, on the north side of town. The city's well house was also damaged.

Lightning reportedly struck on South Sherman Avenue, where a trailer and part of a garage were lost.

Tree branches and random yard items were strewn throughout town following the storm.

City Superintendent Mark Brown said about half of the town was without power at some time Monday evening. The first outage occurred around 8 p.m., and everyone had power by around 11:45 p.m., close to four hours later.

The outage included two-thirds of the south-southwest part of town and about 90 percent of the east side of town, said Brown.

City crews rerouted power to get everyone up and running. Brown said Tuesday morning that they would wait for the storm to subside before repairing the downed power lines.

At 9:25 a.m. Tuesday, some areas of town lost power once again for about 15-20 minutes. Brown explained one power line feeds the area on the north side of the city and another on the south side.

Monday night, they added the south load to the north line. Brown suspects when people starting their heat up Tuesday, overloading occurred. At that point they upsized a fuse to handle the increased load.

A 9:25 a.m. fire alarm at Grainland Co-op chemical plant on County Road 41 was set off Tuesday morning, but there was no fire. The VFD determined it was triggered when the electricity was lost.

Rance Ferguson, Highline Electric Association line superintendent for the Holyoke area, said Tuesday morning that HEA had 18-19 broken poles, mostly in the Holyoke area.

The other HEA area hit Monday night was the Red Willow area north of Yuma and Otis, Ferguson said.

Something blew into poles three miles south of the stoplight in Holyoke, but the rest were downed by the wind itself.

Ferguson said by 2:30 a.m. Tuesday, HEA had everyone's power back on, with the exception of one house in the Red Willow area.

The Weather Channel reported steady winds at 37 mph about 10:45 p.m. Monday, with gusts up to 61 mph during the evening's storm.