

By Jan Rahn

The Grant Tribune Sentinel

A fast-moving, intense storm rolled through the area last Thursday night taking its toll on crops, pivot systems, trees and anything else in its path.

Somewhere between 11 p.m. and midnight, firefighters from Grant went on storm watch to alert the sleeping neighborhoods of approaching wind, rain, hail and possible tornadoes.

According to Grant Volunteer Fire Department Chief Wade Rahn, the storm was big and well organized, moved at 45 mph, and delivered pea-size to golf ball-size hail.

It was hard to decipher the cloud structure so late at night and the storm spotters in Perkins County had to rely on lightning, he said.

According to a report by the National Weather Service that Rahn confirmed, the back window of the grass rig fire truck was broken out by ball-size hail, two miles southeast of Grant.

"It has been a long time since I saw hail that hard," said Rahn.

Crops and pivots around the Madrid/Elsie area took the brunt of the storm.

According to Linda Martens of Martens Crop Insurance, the storm took in an area from Sterling, Colo. to near North Platte. She said she determined from the many calls from clients that the storm seemed to follow along the Highline.

Martens said it had been reported to her that in the Brandon area there was between nickle-size to quarter-size hail accompanied by 60-70 mph winds.

Venango was also badly hit, but the Madrid-Elsie area seemed to catch the worst of it, said Martens, with wheat damage overall varying between 15 to 100 percent. One side of the road would have a field totalled while a field on the other side looked like it was untouched, she said.

With clients all over Perkins County, Martens said her phone has not stopped ringing.

It was reported that power lines were down south of Grinton and that Wallace was without power during the storm. Crop damage and mangled pivots also accompanied the June 18 tempest.