

Twisters plague Louisiana, hitting same man in two towns

By JANET MCCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Dwight Powell lost his Lexus to the massive tornado that injured 33 people and damaged 300 properties on a two-mile rampage through east New Orleans. He had just parked it inside his garage to avoid hail damage before the twister struck.

At least his Yukon pickup truck would be OK, he thought: It was in a friend's repair shop, 60 miles north.

Then his phone rang. "The man called me this morning and said, 'Man, the tornado hit your truck,'" Powell said.

That's a bad joke to tell a friend who just lost his house, he told him.

But it wasn't. The truck was slammed by another tornado that hit Donaldsonville, one of at least four confirmed twisters tearing up Louisiana on Tuesday as a line of severe weather moved across the Deep South.

"I've got to pick up the pieces and walk in faith. God is going to take care of me," Powell said Wednesday.

The other tornadoes injured nine people in the



Dwight Powell recovers mirrors from the bathroom of his master bedroom a day after a tornado touched down in eastern New Orleans on Wednesday.

AP Photo/Max Becherer

Baton Rouge area and two north of Lake Pontchartrain, but nobody was killed, authorities said. Parts of the Florida Panhandle and southern Alabama also saw severe weather Wednesday, but no injuries.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said in a news release Wednesday that two people remain hospitalized, and that 78 people spent

Tuesday night in a shelter, which remains open.

His statement also said that two-thirds of the 10,400 Entergy customers who lost power have had their electricity restored — and the rest may have to wait up to 5 days before getting their lights back on.

National Weather Service teams fanned out Wednesday in Louisiana and Mississippi,

which had one confirmed tornado, to analyze the destruction and estimate their power. They determined that the twister that struck eastern New Orleans was an EF3 on the enhanced Fujita scale, meaning its winds reached from 136 to 165 mph, capable of causing severe damage.

Tornado damage has a distinctive pattern, meteorologist Christopher Bannan

said, unlike damage from a downburst, which radiates outward from a central point, and straight-line wind damage, which all points the same direction.

The state was counting the buildings damaged or destroyed, Mike Steele of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness said Wednesday.

Powell had just finished restoring his house after buying it as blighted property.

"I was about to put my house on the market for sale this Friday. This Thursday, I was going to get homeowners and flood insurance," he said.

He and an employee saw the tornado from the back door, and moved to the front.

"All we heard was that train sound, WooWooWoo BOOM! In 15 seconds it was over," he said. The front of the house was intact, but "the whole back is gone. The garage is gone. The kitchen gone."

Roqueisha Williams lives in the same neighborhood and was sitting on her bed when a friend called to warn her to take shelter. She said she didn't see any rain,

but then she heard thunder. She grabbed a mattress and looked out her front window as she ran to the bathroom.

The sky was "charcoal grey, like the world was just grey. ... and, running through, a strong bolt of turquoise lightning."

"Glass was coming toward me. It sounded like the wind and everything was chasing me," she said. "The wind was whistling, tyoo! Tyoo! Glass was breaking out of the window I'd just looked out of."

She emerged to find the bed she just left covered by shattered glass.

"The Lord was on my side," she said.

Then she ran, shaking, to the nearby school where her eighth grade boys were, because "I knew if I was hit, they were also hit," she said.

Eric Williams, 14, and Erin Williams, 13, were fine. Her other children, Ke'Erica Williams, 15, and Evrin Thompson, 11, were at other schools outside the tornado's path.

She said pieces of walls and part of a blue door had crashed through her car windows.

"Someone else's lingerie is in my front yard," she said.

Hundreds of bison sent to slaughter over tribes' objections

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday started shipping hundreds of wild bison to slaughter for disease control, as a quarantine facility on a Montana Indian reservation that could help spare many of the animals sat empty due to a political dispute.

Fifteen female bison initially slated for quarantine on the Fort Peck Reservation were instead loaded onto trailers near the town of a Gardiner, Montana and sent to slaughter. Hundreds more will be shipped in coming days and weeks, park officials said.

More than 400 bison, also known as buffalo, have been captured this winter attempting to migrate out of the snow-covered park to lower elevations in Montana in search of food. More animals are expected to be captured and shipped to slaughter through



AP Photo/Matthew Brown

This 2016 photo shows a bison from Yellowstone National Park being held for shipment to slaughter near Gardiner, Mont.

March.

Fort Peck's Assiniboine and Sioux tribes built their quarantine facility to house up to 300 animals in hopes of using it to establish new herds across the U.S. with Yellowstone's genetically pure bison.

Tribal Chairman Floyd Azure said state and federal officials "slapped the Fort Peck tribes in the face" by not using the facility.

"They knew we were building a quarantine facility. A lot of money and time and effort were involved in this and all of a sudden they throw a monkey wrench in it," Azure said.

Montana livestock officials and federal animal health agents oppose transferring bison to the quarantine site because the animals have not been certified to be free of brucellosis, a disease that can cause animals to abort their young. Ranchers in the state fear bison could transmit the disease to cattle and would pose competition for grazing space on public lands.

No transmissions of the disease from wild bison to cattle have been documented.

Oil pipeline opponents call for 'last stand' protests

CANNON BALL, N.D. (AP) — With the federal government about to greenlight the final phase of the Dakota Access pipeline, opponents of the project called Wednesday for protests around the world in an action they dubbed their "last stand."

Some members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which has been at the center of the debate for nearly a year, urged "emergency actions" via social media. The Indigenous Environmental Network told people to target fuel-transportation hubs and government build-

ings and to expect violence and mass arrests.

Protesters posted an online list of nearly 50 events in 23 states and the District of Columbia. In one early rally, several people were arrested for blocking public access to a federal building in San Francisco.

At a North Dakota encampment that's been the focus of the pipeline battle for months, the mood was tense, with a few dozen people milling about on a frigid morning and refusing to talk about their plans. They ordered an Associated Press reporter to leave.

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