

Naplate/Ottawa Tornado February 28, 2017

National Weather Service SURVEY_SUMMARY: The first area of significant damage in the EF2 range was in the area around the La Salle County Nursing Home and La Salle County Highway Department, with lighter damage upstream from this location. The tornado continued into Naplate and produced widespread EF2 damage to numerous homes. EF3 damage also was identified in two locations. The first was where a minivan was thrown about 30 yards and a home was lifted off its foundation and left with only its interior walls intact. The second was at the Pilkington Glass plant where one section of the factory was completely destroyed. The tornado then crossed the Illinois River and moved through the south side of Ottawa, producing an 800 yard wide path of EF1 damage to trees and homes. The fatalities in Ottawa occurred from a tree falling onto two men who were working outside. The tornado then crossed the Illinois River again and continued to produce EF1 and EF0 damage as it exited Ottawa, finally dissipating in the area northwest of Marseilles.



Leonard Kennel (IL Unit State Coordinator) first made contact with the Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) during the summer. Ronn Frantz (IL Unit Chair) and Julian Jackson (Living Water Community Church) attended the LTRG meeting on October 5th, then toured the area with the committee Chair, Alexis Ferracuti. The LTRG is composed of six or seven local community members, including leaders from a number

of civic and religious groups. They have organized into Financial, Case Management, Donations, Volunteer Management, Construction Management, and Hospitality Management, and Spiritual Management working groups. They reported that over six hundred homes were affected, of which 331 have requested assistance from the LTRG. Financial assistance and organizing gifts in kind have been given by the Group. Their case management appears to be active and effective. They report good relationships with the local trades. Many tradespeople have donated their time or provided services and materials at cost.

At this point, they have a list of numerous properties with repair needs and have identified ten properties with over \$50,000 worth of repairs required. Seven or eight of those homes still have persons living in them. We saw at least three homes where it was questionable whether the home could be repaired or whether it needed to be demolished and a new building constructed. They have used some of their funds to pay tradespeople to make repairs to homes that would allow them to be lived in over the winter. Construction was evident throughout the two towns and one of the problems is that there are not enough tradespeople for hire to get all of the essential work done.

The LTRG is very interested in working with MDS, therefore. They currently have funds for materials for perhaps three rebuilds but are working on gathering more funds. Initial indications are that local housing would be available if MDS set up a project in Ottawa/Naplate. The question, therefore, is whether MDS has the volunteers available to undertake work here. In speaking with Jerry Grosh, (Binational Operations Director) it is clear that Binational MDS could not take on this project in the near term. I spoke with the LTRG about perhaps IL MDS Unit taking on one house and evaluating from there.

So this is the question that we need to discern at our upcoming Unit Meeting on October 27th and our Region 2 Meeting, that same weekend. What do we think our capacity is in Illinois this coming winter and spring? We have not had a project in our state for awhile and there has been interest among our members in doing something. This would be well located for our congregations, either for weekend projects or more traditional week day projects. How many of our congregations could and would commit to organizing one week's worth of service to MDS in Ottawa/Naplate?

Please be praying and talking about these questions. Please come or send a representative from your congregation to the IL MDS Unit meeting, starting at 3:00 PM on Friday the 27th, in Morton, so that we can seek the Lord together. Please contact Ronn Frantz with questions, thoughts, and ideas regarding this call from Ottawa/Naplate.