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Silent siren spurs controversy

**Feb
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2008**

By Charles Mattox
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Emergency response leaders disagree about the decision not to sound the Carlisle tornado sirens during the early morning hours of Feb. 6, when a violent storm struck.

That storm took seven lives in Kentucky as 26 tornadoes, which have been documented thus far, swept

across the state.

No lives were lost in Nicholas County and only one injury has been reported; an employee of Lee Lynn Manufacturing, on Concrete Road, received a laceration to his hand when the storm threw him to the floor after ripping a large section of the roof away.

"The sirens should have been sounded," Nicholas County Fire Chief Mark

Hughes said following the storm after he and 12 county firefighters responded across the county.

"There were tornado warnings issued for Bourbon and Harrison Counties and the storm was moving this way. The sirens should have been sounded as a precautionary measure if nothing else. We're lucky we didn't have any fatalities. People should have been warned."

"We never received a tornado warning—from the NWS and we never received a call that a tornado had been spotted inside Nicholas County. We certainly would have sounded the sirens if we had received the proper call."

I called in to have the siren activated, but they never were."

Emergency Management Director Calvin Denton said the criteria for sounding the sirens was not met.

"The sirens are for outdoor warnings and are sounded when the National Weather Service (NWS) issues a tornado warning for the county or a specific calls into dispatch having sighted a tornado within the county," Denton said.

"We never received a tornado warning—from the NWS and we never received a call that a tornado had been spotted inside Nicholas County. We certainly would have sounded the sirens if we had received the proper call."

Electricity went out over a

large portion of the city and county as the storm raged and that only complicated the situation.

"No one ever officially called in a tornado sighting," Disaster Relief Howard said. "My chain of command extends to Mr. Denton, the Emergency Management Director."

"I was in contact with Mr. Denton all night, before, during and after the storm. Mr. Denton did not authorize sounding the sirens."

Carlisle Mayor Bonnie Clark commented on the subject.

"It's my understanding that we were never issued a tornado warning from the National Weather Service," he said.

"Everyone has guidelines and policies to follow and it

is my understanding that the correct policies were followed during the storm."

Nicholas County Judge-Executive Larry Tincher added, "It would have done no good to set off the sirens after the storm passed," Tincher said.

"I'm not aware of the National Weather Service having issued any tornado warning at that time for Nicholas County. I commend the city employees and the Nicholas County Emergency Management Director Calvin Denton for their actions and responses."

A similar situation occurred in Allen County, Ky., when sirens did not sound.

"There have been four fatalities reported thus far in that county, according to published reports."

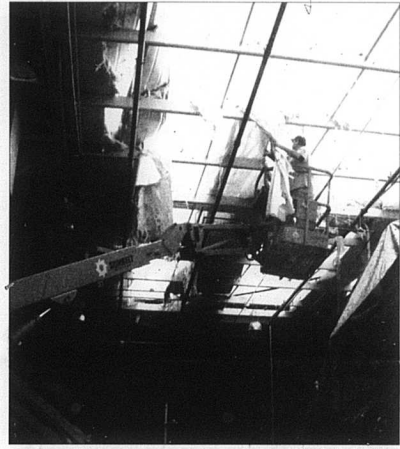


Photo by Charles Mattox

Lee Lynn manufacturing sustained heavy damage in last week's storms.

Second storm rips through county, followed by heavy snow and ice

For the second time in as many weeks sections of Nicholas County were pounded by strong winds.

Less than a week later Nicholas County was blanketed by snow as frigid temperatures were a prelude to school and business closings.

Governor Steve Beshear has declared a state of emergency for Kentucky and he and Nicholas County Judge-Executive Larry Tincher spoke last week following the storm.

"We spoke Thursday night and I asked him to consider including Nicholas County as one of the counties to be declared," Tincher said.

Tincher and Emergency Management Director Calvin Denton signed documents Wednesday morning seeking assistance for storm damage that occurred throughout the county.

As The Mercury goes to press, there has been no definitive action from Frankfort regarding Nicholas County being included in the declaration of emergency. Seven deaths have been attributed to 26 tornadoes that struck Kentucky that

moved several of the automobiles and sent projectiles from scattered debris through his house, buildings and most of his classic vehicles.

His garage was also damaged by strong winds and debris that also protruded from some of the vehicles like a pin cushion.

"We had about 20 vehicles destroyed," McCord said as he viewed the destruction. "Most of the vehicles were classic."

Old Blue, a 1979 Chevy that once belonged to Gary's father, J.C. McCord, was safe, however.

Jeremy McCord, Gary McCord's son, has been driving it and it was at his home and escaped the destruction.

"I guess if I had to pick one to be spared by the storm I would have probably chosen old Blue," McCord said with an understanding nod as his gaze swept among the ruins in and around his garage where customers have come from near and far for decades for his service and knowledge.

Other residents across the

county were also damaged by strong winds and debris that also protruded from some of the vehicles like a pin cushion.

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Teacher suspended

By Charles Mattox
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A Nicholas County Middle School teacher has been suspended after being charged with a class D felony by a Paris Police Detective, in a non-school related incident.

Ten-year veteran Paris Detective Maurice "McLykins," confirmed Friday morning that he had charged Ginger Neace, 34, of Carlisle, with a class D felony charge of fraudulent use of a credit card, at approximately 6 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Paris Walmart, where

Neace also works in addition to her job as an eighth grade teacher at Nicholas County Middle School.

According to statements made by Detective Lykins and Paris Chief of Police Tim Gray, and documents provided by the Paris Police Department, Neace was charged after being confronted by Walmart store security.

Two employees of the Paris Walmart Loss Prevention Team, identified as Scott and Paul in police documents, stated that their employee Ginger Neace had taken Walmart gift cards without paying for them.

The value of the activated cards is \$1,295," the Paris Police documents state and continue by saying, "they went back and pulled video of her swiping the cards to activate them and not paying for them."

"When Scott and Paul confronted her she first denied the allegations, but then recanted and told them she had a problem. She was dismissed at that point as an employee (of Paris Walmart). They showed her on the surveillance camera as sweeping the cards and filling to put money in the

drawer."

Police documents also state that Neace used the cards at Farris and other locations.

Neace is scheduled to appear in Bourbon District Court April 30, according to police documents.

Neace was questioned by Detective Lykins, who also spoke to Walmart personnel, who stated they only sought restitution from Neace and didn't care about jail time, according to police documents.

"We are aware of the charges lodged against Mrs. Neace," Superintendent of Nicholas County Schools Greg Reid said Friday morning.

He confirmed that Neace was at the school that morning and the two were scheduled to meet.

"We will conduct a fact-finding investigation," Reid said.

Later in the day Reid said that Neace was suspended with pay pending the outcome of the district's fact-finding investigation.

Neace said she will plead not guilty to the charges, but declined further comment pending consultation with attorneys.

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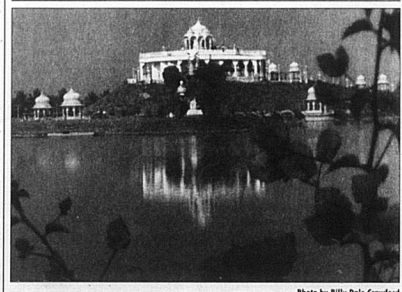


Photo by Billy Dale Crawford

Around the world travel

Retorian Bill Crawford traveled to India. His report and pictures are on Page 18.

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