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Though the stricken Marysville area may not be getting all the media coverage that the Henryville neighborhood of Clark County has attracted since March 2, there were a lot of out-of-county volunteers working there on Sunday, March 11, making a difference any way they could.

A cool breeze helped stir up little eddies of dust along the community's main road as huge Eco Tech tri-axle dump trucks rumbled past the outdoor area where hamburgers and hot dogs were being prepared for Sunday lunch. The "kitchen" served volunteers, state highway employees and several crews from the Henryville Correctional Facility, all of whom had the same purpose: Getting Marysville cleaned up and back on its feet.

"See that house there? That's my house," advised Marysville resident James Helton. "We just got new windows installed. The tornado sucked my old ones right out of the walls. Took my wife's two pet cats, too," Helton recalled. The house, a two-story frame structure, certainly looked worse for wear, but Helton was optimistic. "We'll be okay," he told Scottsburg Mayor Bill Graham.

Graham shook his head later after the men's conversation had concluded. "He and his wife are all right now because there's people around right now, and they're getting their meals from volunteers. What I worry about is when all this help goes away. Where will they be then?" the Mayor wondered.

Mayor Graham was on a reconnaissance mission that Sunday for the Scottsburg Relief Center, located at the Mid-America Science Park in Scottsburg. That center was set up quickly on the Saturday after tornadoes struck in and around Scott County's southern and eastern borders. Team leaders like David and Vickie Richie, Mike McCord and Ross and Sherry St. Clair have devoted many hours to directing the efforts of the center since March 3. Many volunteers have come to its doors. Most come bearing items for tornado victims. Many have stayed on to help sort, catalog and inventory clothing, non-perishable food, water, medical supplies and household goods.

It's easy to reach the affected area northeast of Henryville where the tornadoes first hit. Heading east on State Road 362, there's not much to see, just the typical countryside greening after a mild winter. As you drive closer to the affected area, you begin to see twisted pieces of metal laying in roadside fields. Here and there, a large piece of wood or plastic sticks up incongruously, but there's no real sign in Nabb proper of the immensity of the storms that marched through there on March 2.

Suddenly, there's Kettle Bottom Road and Barnes Cemetery, its entrance from S.R. 362 marked by broken trees twisted and bent by those powerful winds. Across the road, a damaged house sits amidst debris. In some trees, torn metal still decorates their branches. In others, bits of plastic flutter as they catch the wind.

On the ground, metal cables, pieces of what looks like a transformer, broken utility poles and other debris litter the grassy roadside. Whole, uprooted trees line the small road to the cemetery, where many of its headstones have since be replaced on their bases. Even those heavy stones were no match for 175 mph winds.

Though slightly bent to the northeast, the cemetery's sign remains intact.

Further down S.R. 362, you run into the direct path of the tornado. Truly, it does resemble an area recently bombed. What trees remain upright are mere sticks of their former selves. The ground is plastered with natural detritus and man-made items. A couple of dirty-beyond-belief stuffed animals, a quilt, a good pair of men's boots. The twisted frame of a trailer. A reporter aiming a camera at the metal had to be told what the frame had been, the base for a mobile home busted into a million trillion pieces. Buttons, pieces of dishes, more plastic than you would have thought possible dot the ground of the field.

There are no birds in the damaged trees, but frog "peepers" can be heard. It's an optimistic sound that persists despite the background drone of chainsaws.

There are huge rectangular slabs marking where stick-built homes once stood. At one spot, a group of volunteers from Greenwood Community Church south of Indianapolis worked like ants, carrying pieces of burnable debris to a bonfire. Scrap metal is sorted out. Any metal is considered the property owner's possession and is saved to help the owner salvage any value he/she/they can.

Mayor Graham stopped at a tiny, badly-damaged home on the Clark County side. Its wall facing the road still stands as does a small bathroom, where its owner rode out the storm and lived to tell her tale. She hadn't lived there very long, Graham related. The woman's salvaged possessions were tucked under a tarp in back of the ruin that was once her home.

Eight of the 16 homes on the Scott County side of S.R. 362 are gone. Probably more have disappeared on the Clark County side.

And then, as suddenly as it started, the debris disappears, and the countryside is pretty and green and undisturbed.

Nearing Paynesville, S.R. 62 is marked with warning signs placed by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). More destroyed homes are seen, and one small wood building sits nearly at the intersection. "It doesn't belong there. I don't know where it came from," the Mayor comments as he drives past it.

The tornado that ravaged the area tracked east into woodlands and fields, occasionally taking a house or a barn in its path. On Hardy Mill Road, a large plume of smoke can be seen in the distance to the north.

On Concord Road, trees again show the path of the storm. A large farmhouse stands battered, its windows boarded up.

New Washington Volunteer Fire Department appeared late on Sunday morning to be a busy place. Cars and trucks are parked haphazardly around the fire department, A woman approached the Mayor's SUV. She explained that members of the Marysville Christian Church are having their church service there. "Their church is that little one right in Marysville. It's going to be torn down," she said.

The Mayor had hoped to make contact with Rachel Bussey, a team leader of the NWVFD 's relief center at the department headquarters. "Let's leave them to their service. They need that," he commented, backing out of the grounds.

Driving closer to Marysville, three large metal silos lay crumpled like wastepaper in a field to the right. There's also more homes whose roofs are covered with bright blue tarps. "That's hail damage," advised Graham. "They had that big baseball-sized hail come down over here too."

Approaching roads to Marysville are lined with cars, trucks and SUVs, all belonging to hundreds of volunteers helping that day.

He parked his SUV in an obliging resident's front yard and the Mayor headed to the District 9 Command Center, where he found NWVFD Chief Randy Burton, but Burton's wife, Amy, is no

where to be seen. Amy Burton and her friends "...really stepped up. They organized a relief center out of nothing," related her husband. The Mayor shook Burton's hand and left, but the affable Burton willingly talks about what's going on in Marysville.

"All these people, they're just 'paying it forward.' We have people here from Joplin, Mo. (a community also hit hard last year by tornadoes). They've got a sign up, 'From Joplin to Marysville and Henryville, We Love You.' They're helping because they've been in this situation. They know what these folks are going through," Burton stated.

With all the good that's being done in the community, there are always those attracted for the wrong reasons. "We've made at least five arrests. People trying to take scrap metal," Burton, a lieutenant/detective with the Clark County Sheriff's Department, said. "Some always look for the easy dollar."

He praised INDOT and Department of Correction crews. "They've done a phenomenal job. So has Clark County REMC. All the major houses that are structurally sound have their power back on," Burton stated. Water was never a problem in the community, and everyone has septic systems. He said some roads are still being blocked off, however, because telephone and wireless internet company crews are still working to restore services.

This past weekend, Marysville welcomed as many as 1,600 volunteers. "It's amazing what's been done so far. I think there's been 344,000 pounds of debris already removed, but we're not even half done," Burton advised. "We've got a long road ahead of us."

Burton had words of praise for Mayor Graham and the Scottsburg Relief Center as well. "He brought us 125 gallons of kerosene the Saturday after the tornado. Just dropped it off and took off again," he said.

Marysville Christian Church, the wood structure that survived the storm, was scheduled to be torn down on Monday evening. A wireless service team put an American flag on the water tower in back of the little church. It's one of the few structures that showed little or no damage from the storm.

Leaving Burton at his computer in the Command Center, this reporter looks for Mayor Graham and instead finds a Clark County Health Department volunteer who urges her to update her tetanus vaccination. Told her vaccination is current, he smiled and said, "If you run into anyone who doesn't, have them come here. We offer quick service!"

An American Red Cross van is next to the health department tent, offering hot coffee and cold drinks to workers.

Beyond them lays damaged home after damaged home. Several will have to be torn down, one worker advised. "They just aren't safe anymore," he said.

Turning back toward Blackberry Trail, the reporter sees Mayor Graham deep in conversation and standing in the middle of Marysville Road. He was talking with James Helton, the man with the new windows in his house, and Jeff Woods, who owns WW Scrapping.

Woods told the Mayor he has a secured place for damaged vehicles if the Mayor knows of anyone who needs a damaged vehicle moved and stored until an insurance adjuster can visit. "U call and we will haul" is printed on Woods' business cards.

"People with damage have to be careful," he comments. "They could get 'taken' by someone who appears to want to help but just wants to help himself."

As the men talk, they're "beeped" off the road by an on-coming SUV packed with supplies. Anyone can see inside the vehicle; its side windows have been broken out by some of that infamous hail that fell after the tornado passed through.

On the ride home, the Mayor agreed that Marysville and other areas affected by the storms

have long roads to travel.

“It’s not going to be easy for any of them, but we can make it better. When the ‘world’ quits concentrating on these areas, we want to be there to help take up the burden and make it lighter,” he concluded.