

Wausaukee tornado Storm collapses mobile home, uproots trees

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MARINETTE, Wis. - A Wausaukee, Wis., man died Friday when a tornado destroyed his mobile home. Marinette County Sheriff Jerry Sauve confirmed that 43-year-old Douglas E. Brem was the victim.

The National Weather Service (NWS) reported today that an EF-1 tornado touched down in the town of Wausaukee between 4:45 p.m. and 5 p.m. Friday.

An EF-1 is considered "weak" on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, which rates the intensity of tornados on a scale of zero to five. Maximum wind speed of the Wausaukee tornado was estimated at between 100 to 105 miles per hour, said NWS.

Sauve said that the storm was traveling east through central Marinette County and became intense as it approached an area about one mile north of the village of Wausaukee.

It was in this area that four mobile homes, including Brem's, were located.

Sauve said that the tornado blew over and collapsed Brem's home. Fire and rescue crews later found his body in the rubble.

According to NWS, the tornado also caused heavy damage to another mobile home and minor damage to at least four other buildings. Hundreds of trees were either snapped or uprooted.

Sauve added that downed power lines left residents of the Wausaukee area without power.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker toured the damage area on Sunday. He met with local officials and members of the media at Wausaukee High School.

Sauve told the Marinette Eagle-Herald that Walker visited with residents whose homes had been damaged and met privately with Brem's family.

A twister also touched down Friday at a recreational vehicle park and campground in Ontonagon

"It was on the ground for about three-quarters of a mile ... the wind speeds were about 85 mph," NWS meteorologist Matt Zika told The Mining Journal.

The damage path was about 125 yards at its widest.

"It started getting windier, breeze was picking up and I said 'Honey, we better do something now,'" Ontonagon resident Bill LaCoste said. "All of a sudden my air conditioner just went straight out the window, and I started hearing glass smash. When they say it sounds like a freight train coming by, it did. I mean the whole house was like a tremor. It didn't sound good."

Trees were snapped and uprooted, and some utility poles were broken. Some roofs suffered damage and a boat was flipped.

"The power company obviously took a hit with all the down lines," said Ontonagon County Emergency Management office spokesman Bill Johnson. "Damages of course to the trees around here, and it's going to take some work and effort to clean that up."