

# Without Warning: Tornado leaves trail of damage in Lewisetta area

by Jackie Nunnery

LEWISSETTA—A line of storms that moved through the area on Monday, May 3, generated a tornado in the Lewisetta area around 3 p.m.

According to Capt. Ashby Allen of the Northumberland County Sheriff's Office, the tornado left a trail of damage beginning just west of the Callao Rescue Squad where a command post was set up Monday afternoon, before crossing Northumberland Highway to Mt. Zion Plantation and Chambers Road. The tornado then traveled to Bleak House Farm causing further damage, before heading up the Coan River where it flipped a trailer and caused minor damage to buildings at the Lewisetta Marina where the funnel cloud finally dissipated.

"There was no warning," said Bonnie Holden who lives with her husband, Earl, on Lewisetta Road near Chambers Road, where most of the damage occurred. Both were home when the storm hit.

"We thought it was just rain until we heard the sound and the trailer started shaking," she said. Aside from a few limbs in the yard, they were lucky, but Holden said the brief but intense storm was still scary. "After five minutes the sun was back out."

Neighbor Corrine "Neada" Corbin's home of 40 years at 85 Chambers Lane was gone, but her positive outlook remained. "My friend Jesus will take me through," she said. "This is just stuff and we'll get it back better."

A continual stream of support arrived Tuesday morning, while Corbin worked on cleaning up debris in between interviews with area news outlets. "Family came, neighbors came, everyone came. We take care of each other," she said.

Bubba Tapp saw the tornado headed toward the Lewisetta Marina where he was working around 3:15 p.m. "It was surreal seeing it come



The National Weather Service on Tuesday officially declared the storm activity in Northumberland County on Monday a tornado. This photograph shows a funnel forming in an eerie dark sky above Lewisetta. Photo by Ann Heishman

**UPDATE:** The National Weather Service on Tuesday, May 4, confirmed that a tornado struck the Lewisetta area on Monday, May 3.

After surveying the damage, the NWS estimated the tornado to be an EF2 in intensity with winds of 115-120 mph. According to the NWS, the tornado formed in Callao and traveled about five miles before ending near Lewisetta.



Front steps are all that remain of Neada Corbin's home. A Go Fund Me account has been set up to help Corbin rebuild. Photo by Jackie Nunnery



The Holdens witnessed much of the storm's intensity that occurred out their front door. Photo by Jackie Nunnery

TORNADO, continued on page A2



The residence of Ernest and Florence Charlie was heavily damaged. Photo by Jackie Nunnery



Florence Charlie, affectionately known as "Aunt Flossie" around the neighborhood, is consoled. "It didn't hit me until last night," she said. Photo by Jackie Nunnery

## Tornado

continued from page A1

straight at you."

To illustrate just how brief and concentrated this storm was, co-worker Stephen Riddell said he was on a boat in the Coan River when the storm came through and had no idea a tornado had passed through the area. "I heard a little wind, that was it," he said.

Although the National Weather Service (NWS) has not yet officially confirmed the storm as a tornado, pictures and video on social media and news outlets have shown a funnel cloud with the characteristic rotation. Allen said the NWS would be in the area Tuesday, May 4, to confirm and rate the intensity of the tornado.

Prior to the storm, the NWS posted on Facebook Monday morning at 6:30 a.m. that they were "monitoring the potential for a few strong to severe storms this afternoon and tonight. Strong, damaging winds, hail and locally heavy rainfall are the main threats," labeling it a "marginal risk" of severe storms. No tornado watch or warning was issued prior to the event.

Lewisetta Road was closed to traffic due to downed power lines and trees until crews were able to open the road by 10 p.m. Monday night.

Northern Neck Electric Cooperative reported at 1:42 a.m. Tuesday that power had been fully restored to the area. As many as 700 homes were without electricity as a result of the storm.

*Beyond the news deadline on Tuesday, May 4, severe storms, possibly tornadoes, struck communities in the Kilmarnock area. Related coverage will appear in the May 13 Rappahannock Record.*