

Rare twister?

Late November tornadoes are rare, but not unheard of

By Colleen Surridge

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Southeast Kansas residents are usually prepared as tornado season approaches in the spring, but as thoughts drift to the holidays, secondary storm season is often forgotten until a storm hits.

On Sunday, the collision of a cold front from the north colliding with warm air in Southeast Kansas produced two tornadoes in the area.

The National Weather Service of Wichita warning and coordination meteorologist Chance Hayes said one tornado touched down in Cherryvale briefly in open country, but caused no damage. The storm system then continued to the north and east and produced another tornado, which touched down a mile north of Erie.

The tornado, around 80 yards wide with winds of 60 to 70 miles an hour, was on the ground for approximately six miles, he said.

"It produced F1 strength damage where it touched down at one homestead," Hayes said.

The home of Tom and Melva Hudson, near 150th and Rooks roads, was destroyed.

Hayes said more powerful storm systems are produced in the spring and fall as drastic changes from warm to cold air produce lift and create storms.

"Fall storms like this are not all that uncommon from portions of October through early December," Hayes said. "The later it gets, the less likely they are, and they are generally not as strong. The tornadoes tend to be somewhat weaker, but that depends on the atmosphere."

Spring may be the prime season for tornadoes, but Hayes said, "People always need to be alert for the possibility of tornadoes. They occur every month of the year.

"And the southeast quadrant of Kansas has higher tendencies for tornadoes. It has a better opportunity to receive warm weather this time of year than the rest of the state. When cold fronts slam through, the environmental conditions are conducive to storms which produce tornadoes. The same is true for the corners of southwest Missouri and northeast Oklahoma."

With that in mind, as residents in the area are shopping for the perfect Christmas gift, Hayes suggests buying programmable weather radios.

"It may not be a bad idea. Once the alert goes off they can then tune in to their local weather station," Hayes said. "Why live in tornado alley without a programmable weather radio? It's like having your own tornado siren."

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**<http://wire.dailynews.net/parsonssun/news/articles/tornado112905.html>**