

Bunker Hill Tornado Anniversary Comes Around Again: It Left Mass Devastation

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
March 21 2024 3:56 PM



BUNKER HILL - This week marks the 76th anniversary of the Bunker Hill Tornado, which also hit Fosterburg. A news report on March 21, 1948, after the tornado on March 19, 1948, said 30 people died, 435 were injured, 354 homes destroyed and 433 homes damaged in the storm.

Marty Lane of the Bunker Hill Museum said the tornado just about wiped out Bunker Hill at that time. Residents had to rebuild or move elsewhere. She said 19 died in Bunker Hill alone in the tornado.

“It was totally devastating,” she said.

“Today we still have around 1,800 people who live here and a lot of people work in St. Louis or Springfield,” she added. “We are definitely a resilient community. We still have K-12 schools here and it is really a nice community.”

The Bunker Hill Museum has several photos of the destruction and is a place many people visit.

“The tornado hit in the morning around 6:30 on March 19, 1948, and caught people by surprise,” she said.

“Many people were just getting up for work or in bed and were caught completely unaware. There were no tornado sirens back then and that is why so many people were killed.”

Lane said the tornado rated at least an F-4, which is considered a "devastating" tornado with wind speeds up to 260 mph.

“We probably have 500 or more pictures of the tornado,” she said. “I just know they were totally unprepared when the tornado happened and it was such a tragedy for the Bunker Hill community.”