



A row of Sheriff's Department vehicles were damaged to the tune of more than \$18,000 during the July 15 storm which ripped through Council Bluffs. The cars, parked in the

parking lot of the county courthouse, were "sandblasted" by gravel blown from the roof of the building and windows were shattered by heavy winds. — Photo by Tammy Coleman.

City workers busy after storm

By JON LEU
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For city employees, from the mayor on down, the days following the July 15 tornadoes and severe thunderstorms were little more than a blur of flurried activity.

Those employees, many of whom lived in the hardest-hit area of the city, worked 12-hour shifts for the next seven days, helping others without the opportunity to look after their own homes.

For Mayor Tom Hanafan, Friday, July 15, 1988, had started at 7 a.m. when he arrived at his City Hall office. It had already been a busy week for the mayor and his staff. He was 45 minutes from close of business for the 27th week of his first term in office when the storm hit about 4:15 p.m.

But it would be 8 p.m. the following day before he returned to his home at the end of what will probably remain the most unforgettable day of his political career.

The windows in the mayor's office face west, and Hanafan had noticed the dark clouds building even before the warning sirens sounded. He was in the midst of a human-relations discussion with staff members as the rains began to fall and trees began swaying then bending against the ever-strengthening wind.

As soon as he heard the sirens, he went to the central corridor of the building and helped direct people to the basement. He then went to the finance department to check on a report of a plumbing problem.

"I went to the finance department, and water was shoot-

ing straight up in the air from a toilet," Hanafan said. "About that time City Attorney Richard Wade came running in from the law enforcement center across the street saying we had a major disaster on our hands."

At about the same time, Parks Director Dick Downing found Hanafan and told him he had a group of kids at a parks department summer program at Roberts Park on North 25th Street. That group of children — and finding anyone else who might have been injured by the tornadoes — became the immediate concern.

Although the City Hall building had escaped the storm virtually unscathed, the Pottawattamie County Courthouse — site of the joint city-county emergency communications system — had sustained major damage. The radio antenna atop the

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