

Following the storm, there were jokes — most of them from disgruntled workers — about 37-hour days, but that is just what Mayor Tom Hanafan faced in the wake of the tornadoes that hit the city.

Hanafan said the city spent \$16,000 per day for contracted services — mostly private contractors who helped pick up trees and tree limbs — to aid overworked city employees.

He said workers for city Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments had worked 12-hour shifts since the storm hit shortly after 4 p.m. Over time for police division was expected to be about \$100,000.

Officials' main concern following the cleanup effort was that four or five days after the storm, two tree-dumping sites, one at Playland Park and one north of Big Lake Park on North 15th Street, were filling up rapidly. In the days that followed, clouds of smoke drifted into the sky near the parks and eventually Playland became mounded in small piles of burning ash.

Cities are allowed to burn for up to 60 days after a disaster without seeking approval from the Environmental Protection Agency and they must check with the National Weather Service to make certain winds do not carry smoke over nearby Interstate 29 or into residential areas.

Council Bluffs Fire Chief Delbert Burdick said the city was careful about burning at Playland because the park is close to homes. Although Omaha and Carter Lake burned trees constantly after the storm, Burdick said Council Bluffs burned only three days, and was able to avoid disturbing nearby residences with too much smoke.

Burdick said the ash will be trucked to Big Lake. The city prohibited dumping debris other than trees in the parks, he said, so it won't be difficult to return Playland to its original condition.

Although clearing downed trees caused the most headaches for city officials, they were grateful for their protection during the tornadoes' reign of terror.

"The trees took the brunt of the storm," Hanafan said. "The city's worst damage was in areas where there were no trees to protect property."

"The sad thing is that two months from now, when things are back in order, the trees will

be gone," the mayor said.

As many as 8,000 trees in city parks and city-owned right of way were severely damaged or destroyed.

Although the cost of replacing the trees can be calculated, city officials said it would be nearly impossible to place a value on the trees that were destroyed. "What sort of value do you place on a tree that has been standing for 100 years," said

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As Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad (standing, at right) fielded questions from the press, Council Bluffs Mayor Tom Hanafan (seated) explained his tour of the city to members of the City Council. Nonpareil reporter Joe Arterburn (standing, center) was one of the press representatives who accompanied the mayor and the governor on the tour. — Photo by Jon Leu.