



# Ladysmith News

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Thursday, September 1, 2022

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- In the path of the storm**  
Only minor injuries reported **Page A12**

Remembering September 2, 2002

## Labor Day twister offered little warning

By Luke Klink

It has been 20 years since the "Labor Day Twister" caused an initial \$25 million in estimated damage in Ladysmith, ending almost miraculously without fatality or serious injury.

With little warning on Sept. 2, 2002, the storm struck.

The funnel dropped from the clouds just west of the city. For about 30 minutes, the twister was in contact with the ground, raking a swath of devastation 15 miles long and 400 yards wide across central Rusk County. The funnel sucked back up near Ingram, and it was over.

Two decades later, local residents still vividly recall the ferocious storm. They remember the unimaginable damage. They can't forget the breathtaking spirit it took to clean up and rebuild.

A line of storms being pushed by a cold front from the west that produced six tornadoes in Wisconsin that day. Radar showed minor weather activity in northern Minnesota before the front crossed the St. Croix River into Wisconsin. In less than an hour, the front billowed into ferocious yellows and reds on radar screens.

At 1:45 p.m., the National Weather Service issued a Severe Thunderstorm Watch for much of northern and western Wisconsin along and 85 statute miles east and west of a line from 30 miles south southwest of La Crosse to 80 miles northwest of Rhinelander. The NWS forecasted hail to 2 inches in diameter, thunderstorm wind gusts to 80 mph and dangerous lightning are possible in these areas. A broken line of thunderstorms was expected to develop along cold front over eastern Minnesota during the next 1-2 hours with strong instability, steep lapse rates and favorable shear profiles, supporting a risk of large hail and damaging winds in stronger storms. The NWS also warned persons in these areas should be on the lookout for threatening weather conditions and listen for later statements and possible

warnings as severe thunderstorms can and occasionally do produce tornadoes.

Five of the six tornadoes to be spawned from this line of storms were classified as F0-F2 with winds up to 157 mph. These would later sweep through Marathon, Fond du Lac and Taylor counties.

The first tornadic supercell to touch-down in the state would be recorded as the strongest. It produced an F3 tornado that ripped through the heart of the Ladysmith business district with winds clocked at around 200 mph.

The sky darkened with the city ground zero at 4:20 p.m. The tornado produced light F0 damage at the beginning of the path then strengthened to F2, causing considerable damage at the intersection of U.S. 8 and Wis. 27 on the west side of Ladysmith. Severe F3 destruction was found just east of the railroad tracks and through the downtown business area.

As the tornado reached the east side of Ladysmith, it weakened to F2 status. Once it left the city limits, the tornado continued on an eastward path, striking a number of rural farm houses and producing mostly F1 light damage until it dissipated.

In a matter of seconds, the face of downtown Ladysmith was changed forever.

The tornado traveled through the city in an area 16 blocks long and 4 blocks wide, destroying more than 40 buildings and damaging 159 others. After the incident 40 people were taken to the hospital with minor injuries, the most serious of which was a broken leg. Additional damage left 14,000 people in the Ladysmith area without power due to the storm.

The speed at which the tornado arrived was so great the sirens in Ladysmith were never sounded in advance. One of the biggest factors residents attribute to the minor injuries and lack of

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## Tornado impact still echoes 20 years later

**DEVASTATION** — The Labor Day tornado in 2002 leaves a path of destruction through Ladysmith. The storm 20 years ago this Sept. 2, cut a path of damage 16 blocks long and 4 blocks wide through the city. The F3 twister with wind speeds approaching 200mph caused initial damage estimated at \$25 million. There was no loss of life with only minor injuries reported, the worst of which being a broken leg. The tornado tracked an estimated 15 miles for 30 minutes, touching down just west of Ladysmith and returning to the clouds west of Ingram.

— Photos courtesy of Rusk County Emergency Government

## Storm effects still endure for some

By Luke Klink

For many people who lived through the 2002 Labor Day tornado that devastated Ladysmith 20 years ago, life has returned to normal. They have cleaned up, rebuilt and moved on. Sometimes, loss can't be measured by what is visible with a quick first look.

Gone are businesses like the Davis Motel and Enerson Ford, destroyed when the storm blasted apart their exterior walls.

Missing are irreplaceable family pictures and other heirlooms forever lost to the rain and wind.

Never recovered is the sense of security each time bad weather darkens the sky. Those psychological effects still linger two decades later.

"With all the damage that happened, the best thing is nobody died," said Marty Reynolds, who was mayor of Ladysmith on Sept. 2, 2002, the day the storm shattered the city's existence.

The storm's path through Ladysmith was fairly narrow and confined, according to Reynolds. He said the date also being a major holiday with most people gone for the 3-day weekend



**HELPING HANDS** — Residents receive wristbands that allow them to enter the restricted access parts of Ladysmith that were heavily damaged by the tornado.

— UW-Wisconsin Library Archives photo

and schools not yet in session helped the area avoid loss of life.

"If it had been a school day there might have been more injuries or death," Reynolds said. "We would have lost a lot of people if the tornado had come through the center of down-

town at quarter after four on a school day."

In the downtown, business owners lost their livelihoods. Apartment dwellers lost their homes, many that were under-insured or uninsured.

The buildings may look old but they belong to someone and they are homes and businesses for many, according to Reynolds.

"They were lucky to get away with their lives, but many of them lost everything," Reynolds said.

Among their possessions were irreplaceable pictures, treasured heirlooms and important family records.

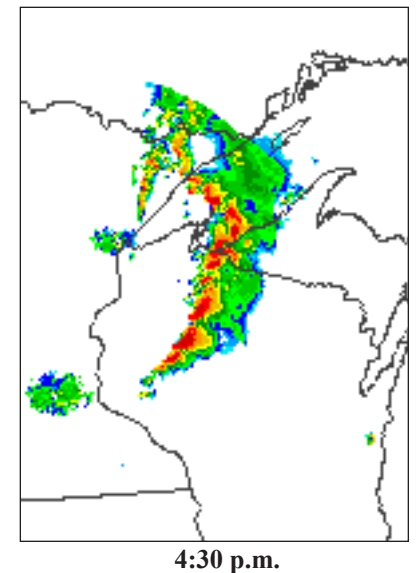
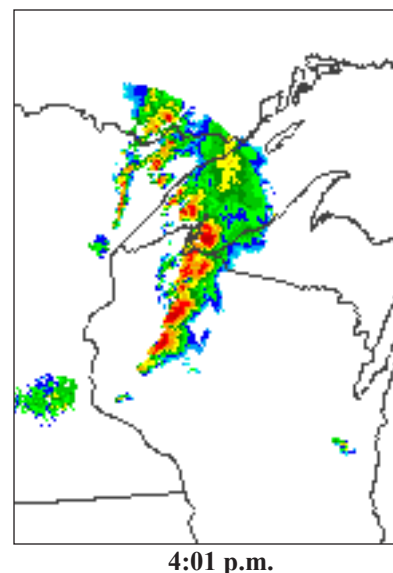
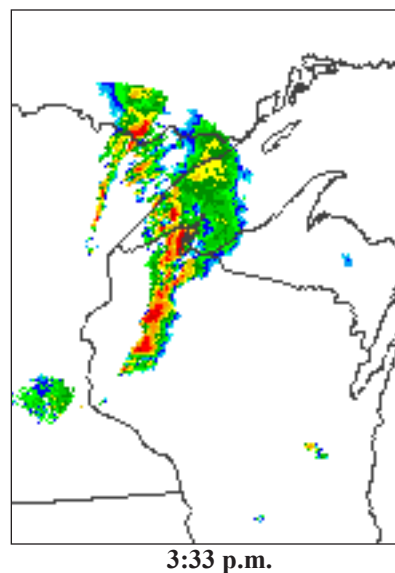
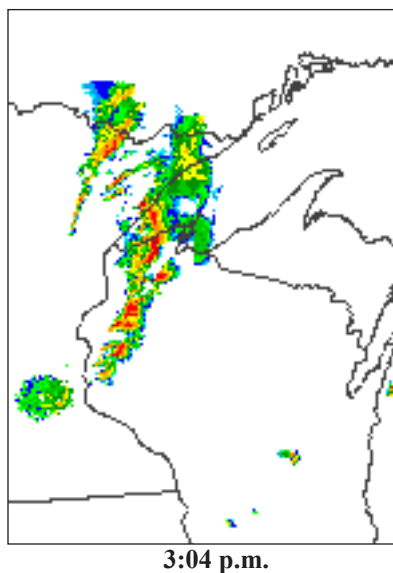
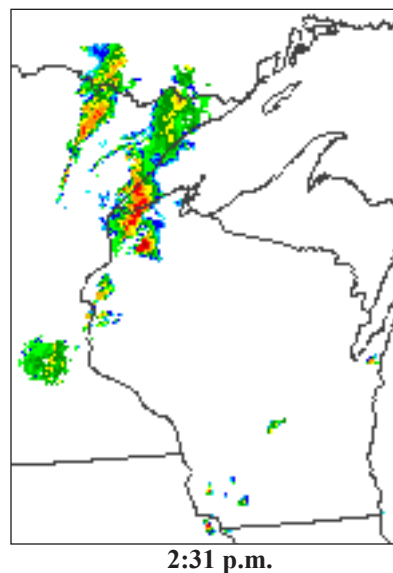
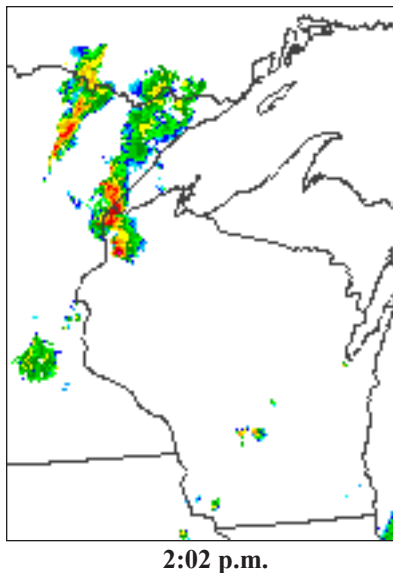
In just a few minutes, life changed for a lot of people.

"The people that lost those buildings, they lost more than just the buildings. They lost lifetimes of pictures, memories and records. All of it was gone," Reynolds said. "We had people that were living in those buildings. We had apartment buildings where people were able to get away with their lives."

Reynolds praised those from outside the community who donated materials, sent financial contributions and lent a hand in the cleanup. He also criticized others who arrived just to receive handout he says they didn't rightly deserve.

"They had a right to whatever help

In the twister's path: NOAA radar from Sept. 2, 2002 shows storms rapidly erupting before hitting Ladysmith at 4:20 p.m.



**HELPING HANDS** — The Youth & Senior Center at the Rusk County Fairgrounds fills up with volunteers ready to lend a hand with the clean-up



**SHEERED OFF** — The upper floor of the former Davis Motel in Ladysmith is exposed to the air during the storm.



**CLEANUP BEGINS** — Crews survey the damage on the south shore of the Flambeau River. Since then, this area has grown over with vegetation.





**CARS TIPPED**— Three historic Soo Line rail passenger cars were flipped onto their sides after the storm. A large crane was used to restore them to upright position at the Sweet Soo Rail Display along Wis. 27 at the Rusk County Visitors Center

# Storm: Scars are emotional after 2 decades

Continued from Page A1

they could get, but there were a lot of people who went back day after day to the distribution site on Doughty Road, picking up stuff that they probably should never had access to. We saw the best of people and the worst of people because of the tornado," Reynolds said.

Twenty years later, it is hard to spot physical effects of the 2002 Labor Day tornado.

People have come together to clean up and do some really good things through rebuilding and redeveloping, according to Reynolds. But the emotional wounds and scars still linger below the surface, he said.

"The damage you don't see is personal," Reynolds said. "It is records, pictures and other things that are gone. Parts of peoples lives are gone that they are never going to be able to replace."

Personal impacts from the storm will endure for a long time, according to Reynolds.

"The city may look better after the tornado, but there are a lot of peoples lives that were torn apart and they won't get that back again," Reynolds said.

"Most people have gotten on with their lives. They have repaired, replaced or moved out," Reynolds said. "There are still a lot of people who are feeling the impacts of it. They have had their lives devastated. They go looking for pictures that aren't there. They go back for records of some sort, and those are gone."

There was a lot of devastation, according to Reynolds.

"A lot of it is psychological. We find ourselves now watching the sky for tornadoes. We stay up and watch the sky," Reynolds said.

### The Schultzs

Jim and Cora Schultz were at home. It was a muggy day, and Cora was up stairs on the phone with her grandson. Jim was watching tennis on TV. Their house overlooks the Flambeau River.

When Cora came downstairs, she noticed out the patio door window debris flying through the air. She screamed, and Jim raced to her thinking she had fallen down the steps.

"At that moment you could hear the noise. It sounded like a train," Cora said.

They bolted for the laundry room that offered greater protection with no windows.

After the storm passed they found glass from their front windows stuck in the wall. The front porch of their neighbor was gone.

"She was full of blood but she wasn't hurt," Cora said.

Storm winds tossed two vehicles into their front yard, with one landing upside down. A woman and a dog was inside one.

"The girl was crying because she thought she was going to roll into the river, and she couldn't swim," Cora said.

The couple also inspected the damage at their business in downtown La-



**TOWER TOPPLED** — The watertower emblazoned with the name "Ladysmith" is completely destroyed with parts flung as far as Memorial Park across the Flambeau River

ladysmith, Jim's Barber Shop.

She called the incident "surreal" but noted it took place without any serious injuries.

"When you think about all the damage that was done no one was seriously hurt," Cora said.

She described the community spirit to clean up after the storm, "awesome." She said volunteers, church groups and hundreds of others came to lend a hand.

"Everybody who didn't get hit was here to help," Cora said. "The people in town also were there to help in a big way."

"All the personal and material things can be replaced," she said.

### The Hrabans

Details of the storm are still vivid for Ladysmith resident Mike Hraban. His home on Lake Avenue overlooking the Flambeau River offered a direct view of the storm approaching from the northwest.

Mike and Peg Hraban were enjoying the nice warm sunny afternoon in front of their home with their chocolate lab, Coco. The sky was dark in the west, but it did not seem threatening to the couple.

Upon returning inside, they turned on the police scanner, and heard the Bruce Fire Department was returning to the fire hall after being paged out for a weather watch.

Mike sat down in the living room. Peg was working in the kitchen.

Over the scanner came an alert of an explosion at Jiffy Lube.

Peg hollered to Mike the scanner reported it was a tornado.

"I heard the sound of the train coming. It was the same sound I had heard on the training videos at the fire hall," Mike said.

The couple raced to shut the windows, but most of them ended up blowing out during the storm.

"It was getting very loud and dark," Mike said.

Mike went to a bedroom to grab the dog that was hiding on the floor near a bed. He noticed the water level in the river appeared to be pulled back to just the channel.

"Then I saw the top of the water tower fly across the river to the park," Mike said. "It was a split second thing."

As Mike carried Coco out of the bedroom and down the hallway, the bathroom door slammed and the window blew out.

As they headed downstairs the living room windows burst, causing Mike to tumble to the bottom of the steps.

"It was very dark and loud," Mike said. "The only light was when the electric poles in the backyard fell and the 7,500 volt transformer would arc and light up."

The rain was pulsating against the house. The wind prevented the basement door from being closed, according to the couple. They heard what sounded like a rifle shot.

"Then there was a big gust of wind and it was quiet," Mike said. "We didn't know at the time that the utility shed had blown apart and the wood 2x4s had come through the basement windows and hit the walls on either side of us."

The glass from the exploding windows stripped the felt off their full-sized pool table.

As they sensed the wind dying down, the Hrabans came up the stairway and peered across the river. There was no glass left in their windows. An entire sewing room was gone. Also destroyed was a 22 foot long garage wall measuring 16 feet tall with two rows of

cement blocks attached.

"The whole section flew across the street south into the neighbor's driveway," Hraban said. "There was so much debris in the river you could walk across to the other side without getting your feet wet."

The couple suffered about \$160,000 in damage to their home. They stayed at a motel for 10 weeks, noting great support they received from family, friends, volunteers and insurance company representatives.

"We were lucky. Very lucky. There were no injuries," Mike said.

It all happened in 24 minutes, according to Mike.

"It made us all stronger," Mike said.

## Tornadoes

Wisconsin averages 23 tornadoes a year. The peak tornado season in Wisconsin is April to August, but tornadoes can occur any time of year. Tornadoes can occur any time during the day or night, but are most frequent between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

About 80% of tornadoes that hit Wisconsin are relatively weak, with winds under 100 mph. Only 1% are violent with winds over 200 mph. They may strike quickly, with little or no warning.

The average tornado moves southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction. The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 MPH, but may vary from stationary to 70 MPH.

The worst tornado in Wisconsin history killed 117 in New Richmond on June 12, 1899, when a circus in town that day attracted hundreds from surrounding communities.

### What to do Before a Tornado

- Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.

- Look for approaching storms

- Look for the following danger signs including a dark, often greenish sky, large hail, a large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating) and a loud roar similar to a freight train.

If you are in a structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building) — Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.

If you are in a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home — Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter.

If you are in the outdoors with no shelter — Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter. Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

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**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2**  
 6:00 pm.... **Double Elimination Wood Bat Softball Tournament** begins. Info. call 715-790-1823

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3**  
 7:30-11 am ..... **United Methodist Church Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale**  
 8:00 am ..... **Softball Tournament Continues**  
 9:00 am ..... **Pickleball Open** - Info & enter call 715-492-7788  
 9:00 am ..... **Spikeball** - Info call 715-642-0335  
 9:00 am ..... **Volleyball Tournament** - Info & enter call 715-642-0335  
 10:00 am-3:30 pm ..... **Sports Memorabilia Auction at the Park**  
 10:00 am-3:30 pm..... **Booster Day Bazaar** - Info call 715-790-3555  
 11:00 am ..... **Weyerhaeuser & Railroad History** by John Terrill at the Depot  
 1:00-5:00 pm ..... **Kids Activities**  
 7:00 pm-8:00 pm ..... **Line Dancing** (no cover charge)  
 8:00 pm-10:30 pm..... **CHRIS KROEZE** (no cover charge)  
 sponsored by Centerline Architectural Supply  
 10:30 pm-11:30 pm ..... **DJ Music** (no cover charge)

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4**  
 8:00-10:30 am ..... **VFW french toast breakfast** - VFW Hall  
 8:00 am ..... **Softball tournament continues**  
 8:45 am ..... **Kids Run**  
 9:00 am ..... **5K Walk/Run** - Info & enter call 715-642-0335  
 10:00 am ..... **Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church Outdoor Polka Mass**  
 11:00 am ..... **Weyerhaeuser Firemen's barbecued chicken at the park**  
 11:00 am ..... **Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church chicken dinner**  
 12:30 pm ..... **Kiddie Parade downtown** - Info & enter call Brad 715-353-2571  
 12:45 pm ..... **Street Parade downtown** - Info & enter call Brad 715-353-2571  
 2:00-5:00 pm ..... **Kids Activities**  
 2:00 pm..... **Bean Bag Tournament** - Meet on volleyball court to register and play  
 2:00 pm-5:30 pm..... **Dance - Doctor Kielbasa (Polka)** (no cover charge)  
 6:30 pm-10:00 pm..... **Dance - Craig Ebel and DyVersaCo (Polka)** (no cover charge)

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**CLOVERBELT LUMBER**

For buying my beef steer at the Rusk County Jr. Fair.


**SIDNEY HEATH**



**THANK YOU!**  
**MOBERG ELECTRIC**

For buying my beef Steer at the Rusk County Jr. Fair.

Sadie Heath



**THANK YOU!**  
**Certified Automotive**

For buying my beef steer at the Rusk County Jr. Fair.

**ELLIE HEATH**





# Tornado: Effects still linger

Continued from Page A1

fatalities is many were gone for the Labor Day holiday.

The National Weather Service issued a tornado watch at 4:45 p.m., nearly a half hour after the storm passed through Ladysmith. The NWS performed a damage survey the next day, and the most severe damage, rated F3, was in downtown Ladysmith.

Gone was the 1916 watertower bearing the "Ladysmith" name, its top coming to rest in Memorial Park on the other side of the Flambeau River.

Quality Quick Lube was totally destroyed. The canopy at Jerry's Amoco was leveled, and the shop damaged. The top floors of the Davis Motel were ripped open, exposing rooms to the air. The fire department roof was peeled open. The roof was ripped off the UCC Church. Ladysmith Baptist Church was destroyed. Faith United Methodist Church was irreparably damaged. The newly remodeled Thrivent Financial building was reduced to a pile of bricks. Three historic Soo Line passenger cars at the Sweet Soo Rail Display each weighing around 60 tons were tipped over on their sides.

Two old brick buildings collapsed. A truck was picked up and thrown into a tree. Busted telephone poles dangled from their wires. Snapped lumber and broken glass lay strewn across streets, sidewalks and parking lots. Flag poles were bent at 90 degrees. Trees laid across front yards.

Very few buildings in the downtown area avoided damage. Roofs were blown off several homes. Many garages were flattened.

The community's faith was shaken, but not shattered.

The Wisconsin State Patrol and other area law enforcement agencies assisted in directing traffic and implementing an 8 p.m. curfew to help police the damaged area.

Gas lines in the city were shut off to prevent explosions due to ruptured lines.

The National Guard was expected to help with cleanup. Volunteers arrived by the busload. Chainsaws buzzed through neighborhoods.

Debris was collected out of nearby farmland so crops could be harvested.

Residents stood in line outside the Rusk County Law Enforcement Center, waiting for wristbands that would allow them to pass police barricades and return to what was left of their homes.

Windows were boarded up. Roof holes were covered with tarps. Debris was piled up. Electrical service started coming back on.

Gov. Scott McCallum toured the area by helicopter the next day, after declaring Rusk County a disaster area. He made the same declaration for nearby Taylor County, where a Gilman school suffered significant damage.

"You just thank God nobody was killed," McCallum said.

He said the county would receive \$1.5 million in low-interest home loans, \$1 million in low-rate financing for small businesses and \$35,000 in immediate emergency assistance. He also promised grants for paint and other repairs should county officials request them.

Federal Emergency Management Agency inspectors toured the city.

Others also got involved by either donating items or money.

Local business, Weather Shield Windows & Doors, obtained food and water for residents and volunteers. Some of the other businesses that got involved in the clean up were Home Depot, which donated equipment and labor. Miller Bottling Company, Kraft and Walmart each donated bottled water or food. The trucking company, Millis Transfer, volunteered the use of its trucks to ship supplies to the city.

Ladysmith schools were closed because of the damage.

In response to McCallum's request for federal aid, President George W. Bush declared 19 Wisconsin counties as federal disaster areas. The counties covered in this declaration were Barron, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Polk, Portage, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Shawano, St. Croix, Taylor, Washburn, Waupaca and Wood. This enabled FEMA to get money to the area through grants and low interest loans, which was used to help both residents and businesses get back on their feet. FEMA also picked up the expensive cost of cleanup to the area, which until then the state had been covering.

Police Chief Norm Rozak said in the days after the storm the twister was already on the ground and traveling through the city before the weather warning siren was sounded. Some residents said they never heard the sirens until after the tornado passed.

Ladysmith resident, Geraldine Pratt, who passed away in 2013, was quoted in the *New York Times*. She described how she had just returned home from an outing when the tornado hit about 4:30 p.m.

At her house, glass shattered, plaster crashed and trees snapped.

"I was hanging onto the doorknob in there going to the basement," she said, "but I couldn't get the basement door open. So I just hung on."

After the storm, her porch furniture was left hanging in trees. Both chimneys of her white-frame house were destroyed, the trees she had planted in her backyard were ruined and all that remained of her garage was a concrete

slab.  
 "I was there thinking, is the house going to fall in? Is it going to blow away? And is my gas going to explode? You think of all those things in just seconds," Pratt was quoted in the *New York Times*. "That's why I say I'm grateful I'm here."  
 On the south side of the city, there was almost no damage.  
 It was estimated the total destruction of the storms caused \$31 million dollars in damage to the entire 19 county area that was hit by the line of severe weather.

Between insurance and FEMA assistance the city got a new water tower that likely would otherwise have been replaced soon, owing to its age, and have been paid for by city water user rates.

"On the other hand, I believe there were many smaller hidden costs that were never recovered, which cost more," said former City Administrator Al Christianson, who was serving in that position at the time of the tornado.

While the community was seeing some growth in property values in that time period, the property value in the downtown area was flat when the tornado hit. Even though 39 structures were lost in the downtown, considerable repairs, remodeling and new construction and investment in this same area caused its value to rise faster than the balance of the city for a few years after.

The Marshfield Dental Center is a notable example, according to Christianson.

Christianson adds he doesn't see or recognize influences of the storm 20 years ago.

"What stands out for me about the tornado, was that it brought out the best and worst in some people," Christianson said. "I may have been in a position where this was more apparent to me, but it's the part I haven't forgotten."

Many people were incredibly generous with their time, effort and pocketbooks, according to

"Some assisted neighbors for hours or days. Some, including both residents and non-residents alike, assisted people they didn't even know beforehand. A few, unfortunately, took advantage, making themselves out to be victims, when they were not," Christianson said.

Current Ladysmith Administrator Alan Christianson, Jr., the son of the prior city administrator, was a 14-year-old city resident in 2002. He notes the loss of numerous historic downtown buildings because of the storm. In his opinion it seemed some of those buildings were barely hanging on in productive uses or were very near the point of needing substantial reinvestment.

"But they were still iconic buildings that were a part of our city's historical fabric," Alan Christianson said.

These include Jim's Barbershop, Davis Motel, Ditmanson's building, Robinson Motor Company building and James Sport Shop.

The tornado also took away the old time holiday nostalgia through the ability to string old Christmas lanterns across Miner Avenue that are a fond memory for many. The storm eliminated many of the two story buildings that housed the mounting anchors.

"There are still empty lots in the downtown that linger from the tornado and still homes and personal possessions that cannot be physically replaced," Alan Christianson said. "Some of the businesses that were destroyed rebuilt on the same or different locations. Others did not. Some that rebuilt have gone by the wayside in the years that passed."

In some cases, new businesses came in to take place of the old. Some of the new construction that followed the tornado is still among the highest valued property in the city.

Alan Christianson called on the community to support existing businesses and places that sponsor local festivals, clubs and school programs. He also encouraged reuse of vacant lots in and around the downtown for business or housing.

"When you spend here, it circulates here," he said. "It generates county sales tax, supports local employees, local business owners and local organizations instead of places an hour or two down the road. We as a community have the power to lift ourselves up."

As a 14 year old about to start his freshman year of high school, Alan Christianson said he was shocked by the utter devastation he saw as he rode his bike downtown immediately following the storm. He witnessed buildings partially or totally destroyed, trees uprooted and mangled vehicles.

"At the time, it looked more like the remnants of a war zone that you would see on a WWII documentary," Alan Christianson said.

But then he saw something else.

He said he was buoyed by seeing the investment and reinvestment in the city from the business community. He said he was energized by watching investments being made throughout the community on previously undeveloped land as well as on sites that were destroyed by the tornado.

"Friends, neighbors and complete strangers of all ages came together to help clean up," Alan Christianson said. "I was proud to see people from our community and from outside the community come together in the hours, days and weeks following the tornado to pitch in and help clean up the damage."



**BUILDINGS LEVELED** — Numerous buildings in Ladysmith were severely damaged or destroyed entirely by the severe tornado including this structure that had housed the former Enerson Ford dealership.



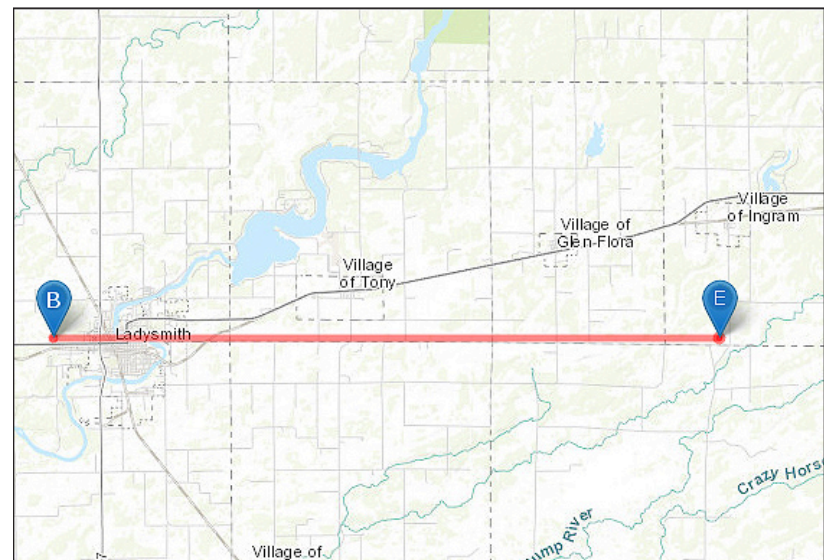
**OPEN AIR MASS** — Plastic sheeting is used to shield the UCC Church on Lake Avenue from the elements after the structure was severely damaged.



**TEAM WORK** — Volunteers get to work after the storm, cleaning debris along the Flambeau River.



**STRONG WINDS** — Powerful winds uprooted these large trees in the city as cleanup work begins. The storm downed numerous trees and power poles.



**IN THE PATH OF THE STORM** — The tornado track is approximate based on the beginning (B) and ending (E) locations. The actual tornado path may differ from a straight line.

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# Ladysmith strong after storm leaves trail of damage on Labor Day 2002



**EMERGENCY REPAIRS** — Siding is ripped off the old fire hall southwest of the intersection of Miner Avenue and W. Third Street, exposing fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to the elements.



**ROOF DAMAGE** — The Ladysmith Federal Savings & Loan building along Lake Avenue, southeast of W. Fourth Street N, takes on massive damage as its roof caves in.



**APARTMENTS DAMAGED** — Greenwood Manor Apartments along Miner Avenue east of Wis. 27 is heavily damaged as parts of its roof it torn off.



**STATION DAMAGED** — Jerry's Amoco is severely damaged. The station's fuel island canopy is destroyed, and the shop has siding torn off.


★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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**A REAL MESS** — Tornado damage begins piling up along Lake Avenue as construction materials begin piling up for disposal. For about 30 minutes, the twister was in contact with the ground, raking a swath of devastation 15 miles long and 400 yards wide across central Rusk County. The funnel sucked back up near Ingram, and it was over.

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**NATIONAL COVERAGE** — Media outlets from across the region and nation, including, some with satellite dishes and helicopters, begin covering the tornado devastation as a breaking news story.