

Features



Congressman Jason Smith Views Tornado Damage in Dexter

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Dexter, MO - Congressman Jason Smith toured the damage left behind in Dexter after an EF2 Tornado swept through the area on Saturday, July 10, 2021. Smith was joined by SoutheastHEALTH of Stoddard County administration, State Representative Herman Morse, MO Senator Jason Bean, Dexter Fire Chief/City EMA Director Don Seymore, City Administrator Trevor Pulley, and Dexter Police Chief Hank Trout.

Smith first took a tour of SoutheastHEALTH of Stoddard County where there was damage to various parts of the building, roof, and outer areas of the hospital grounds.

The hospital has made strides in repairs and was given an "overall good report" after structural engineers inspected the building.

Smith said it's a must to get the hospital back up and running as soon as possible. "This hospital is very, very important because any rural community deserves a hospital to help provided health care that we need, 7,500 people live right here in Dexter," commented Smith.

"This hospital was so important that vice president (Hubert Humphrey) of the United States came here for the ground-breaking back in the late 60's."

"We have to do it as quickly as possible because everyday they're not up and around is that much health care that's not being provided to the people here in Stoddard County. And even surrounding counties for that because if you look just south of here in Dunklin County, they don't have a hospital there either, so we need it," Smith said.

It's also Southeast Health's goal to restore emergency services operations sometime
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Smith then took an auto tour of the damaged residential areas of Dexter. It was amazing to see that the community had come together so quickly and a large portion of the fallen trees had already been cut and stacked by the side of the street for city crews to pick up and discard.

"It is amazing how Dexter has bounced back so quickly with the community help. Everyone jumped to action," said Smith after the tour. "You saw something that happened Saturday evening and this is Tuesday. They (residents) are back to business where they open up. I've seen a lot of natural disasters in our congressional district and friends helping friends and neighbors. Dexter has been a great example here. I am so thankful no one was killed and from what we have been told no one was injured."

After the tour Don Seymore, Dexter Fire Chief/City EMA Director about the city's response to the tornado disaster.

"When the incident started we activated the emergency management plan and once the emergency management plan was activated we made rapid progress. We worked all the way to 2:30 a.m. Sunday morning to get the main streets opened up and made real progress. I felt the street and water department and the police and fire all worked well together along with Missouri AmerenUE. They walked the streets with us to tell us which trees had power in them. I felt it really went real well and by Sunday night we had every street and alley opened up."

Seymore said there are 32 blocks worth of damage to property in Dexter, and about 750 assessments so far conducted by Dexter City Fire Department and other crews.

AmerenUE had more than 1,100 crew members on the ground by Sunday into Monday restore power.

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Sparklight had numerous trucks out to help with restoring lost internet and cable. They have set up two numbers to call 573-614-7825 or 573-614-7829. These numbers are used for those who have been affected by the EF2 Tornado only and are temporary. Roughly 1,000 customers experienced some type of disruption

There is also temporary Wifi hotspot service set up at Pavilion #2 in West Park. No password is required.

The Dexter Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Alisha Trammell, has set up an account to accept monetary donations to help provide relief to those impacted by last Saturday's EF2 tornado. Any financial donation amount will make a big impact.

Donations can be made at the Dexter Chamber of Commerce located at 515 W. Market Street or at First Midwest Bank with two Dexter locations; 819 W. Business 60 or 20 W. Stoddard.

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Written by Dee Loflin
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