

Norfolk Insider

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“Providing Mutual Aid to Pilger and Stanton Areas”

When a disaster occurs in Northeast Nebraska, it’s not just one emergency entity that responds, it may be ten or more. Even as the tornadoes were bearing down on Pilger Monday afternoon, mutual aid partners including the City of Norfolk, geared up to help in any way they could.

The Norfolk Police dispatchers were some of the first to learn of the impending destruction in the Stanton and Pilger areas. Not only do the dispatchers send out emergency alerts of dangerous weather in the area from their headquarters, they also handle Stanton County emergency calls. It soon took three fulltime dispatchers and overflow staff to handle the emergency communication traffic from what would soon be one of the worst disasters to hit Northeast Nebraska.



Scott Cordes, Norfolk Fire Chief, said his division was asked to help assist the Stanton emergency personnel in freeing five people who were trapped in a rural Stanton farmhouse after it was struck by the tornado. Norfolk firefighters assisted The City of Stanton by placing an ambulance in Stanton during the time their rescue vehicles and workers were out assisting tornado victims.

Mutual aid from area fire and rescue divisions was then requested to help the rescue effort in Pilger so Cordes sent two crews or 24 members of the Norfolk Fire Division there.

“The first thing their Emergency Operations Center asked of us was for our Hazardous Material Team to stabilize the propane tanks at an agriculture facility. We then evaluated the condition of some buildings storing farm chemicals and determined that there was no danger at that time to the public,” Cordes said.

Norfolk rescue personnel helped local law enforcement in checking rural farm homes and county roads to make sure that people were safe. They also helped search buildings inside Pilger for anyone who might need help.

“The fire rescue personnel from Stanton and Pilger as well as the Stanton County Sheriff’s Office were doing an outstanding job taking care of their jurisdictions. We were there just to supply support in any way we could,” Cordes said.

Norfolk Police Chief Bill Mizner said two Norfolk police officers were called in to assist in providing overnight security in Pilger and Mark Miller, Norfolk Streets Supervisor, said the City provided barricades to block an intersection on Highway 275 going into Pilger.

Norfolk Fire, Police and Street divisions continue to be on standby for any further aid needed in the Pilger and Stanton areas.

“All the area towns do what they can for each other. None of us have all the manpower or equipment it takes to deal with a disaster like this,” Cordes said.