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Lincoln Journal

Edition City

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Lincoln, Neb., Wednesday, June 4, 1980 — 48 Pages

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Grand Island twisters kill 7

From News Wires and Staff Reports GRAND ISLAND — From five to 13 tornadoes screamed through Grand Island Tuesday night, killing at least seven persons, injuring more than 120 others and leveling hundreds of homes and businesses. Hall County Supervisor Irene Abernathy said 25 persons were feared dead, but Mayor Robert Kruz, Gov. Charles Thone and Grand Island Acting Civil Defense Director Howard Mason said they were unable to confirm that figure, The Associated Press reported. At noon Wednesday, a spokesman for the State Patrol said seven were dead, but only six of the deaths were confirmed. "Nobody really knows how many deaths there are," Thone said after taking an aerial tour of the devastation Wednesday morning. Scores of persons were missing, but officials said many of them were expected to turn up when order was restored. There was no list of casualties available through late Wednesday morning. "It is a terrible thing that has happened here," Mason said. "I just can't even begin to tell you what it's like." Thone said Hall County officials "had indicated that there may be an undetermined number of more fatalities in the Capital Heights section on Grand Island's northeast side," AP said. The northwest and southeast sections of the city were hardest hit. More than 120 square blocks were heavily damaged. The path of the destruction was six blocks wide, The AP reported, and ran along two of the city's major streets. Thone declared the city a state disaster area Tuesday night. National Guardsmen, State Patrol troopers and the Red Cross were dispatched to the area. The governor sent a telegram Wednesday morning asking President Carter to declare the city a federal disaster area. Thone said the tornadoes have been described in news reports "worse than the twister that hit Omaha a few years back (1973)," The AP reported. John Tyson, meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Grand Island, agreed with those reports. He said he believed it also was worse than the one that hit Topeka, Kan., in 1966. See GRAND ISLAND on Page 10A



Dennis Alexander sits on a car and surveys the wreckage of the apartment where his wife and daughter survived a tornado in Grand Island. He was out of town when the twister struck.

inside Weather: Page 16A Tonight: 40% storm chance, warm Thursday-Saturday. Thursday's High 92 (31C) Low 70. Ten new Cuban refugee families will be moving to Lincoln in about two weeks. Their sponsors will be 10 Cuban families who were reunited here in the early 1960s. Page 17 Action Line: 21 Legal Notices — 24 Ann. Listings — 17 Lincoln — 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Subscriptions: 1118 TV Ads — 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Huge storm system hammers state with rain, winds

By Corlie Huddle A severe thunderstorm watch was issued for southern Nebraska Wednesday morning and scattered thunderstorms — a few possibly severe — were predicted by the weather service for Wednesday night. North central and northeast Nebraska were in a tornado watch Wednesday morning. Reports of tornadoes cropped up in the counties near Grand Island and a possible twister was reported at 11 p.m. Tuesday night eight miles northeast of York.

The weather service also reported possible funnel clouds five miles northwest of Waco between Waco and Gresham, southwest of Butler, northeast of Seward and near Phillips. Officials in the sheriff's office near each of those communities said they had received no damage, injury or loss-of-life reports. United Press International reported. An upper air disturbance moving east and over a warm front extending south of Grand Island triggered the thunderstorm system, a National Weather Service official said.

Described as extremely dangerous, the thunderstorm cell was at least 20 miles wide when it formed above Grand Island shortly before 8 p.m., according to weather experts. Radar showed the cell topping above 60,000 feet — nearly 13 miles into the earth's atmosphere, The Associated Press reported. "Most of the time, our thunderstorms may extend up to 40,000, maybe 45,000 feet," Gary Weise, meteorologist in the weather service's Omaha station told AP. "This was one of the largest I've come across in the 10 years I've been working with the weather service." An unusual aspect of the storm was that it didn't move more than four or five miles from Grand Island, hitting the city for nearly three hours with tornadoes spinning off the low-pressure cell, the weather service said. The crew at the Grand Island weather station had to evacuate their office. See WEATHER Page 10A

Determined Kennedy bites Carter's hand of friendship

By The Associated Press President Carter emerged Wednesday from the long-primaried primary campaign with the Democratic delegate majority he needed for his renomination, but his moment of triumph was clouded by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's refusal to abandon his challenge. Carter claimed a "wondrous victory" as the last eight Democratic primaries boosted him over the top in delegate commitments. He offered the "hand of friendship" to Kennedy in an effort to gain Democratic support for his campaign against Republican Ronald Reagan. But while Carter claimed victory in the overall race for delegates, Kennedy had his biggest night of the primary campaign. Kennedy's toughest strategy for overcoming Carter's delegate lead called for a strong showing in the final primaries that might convince Democrats that Carter was a likely loser to Reagan in the Nov. 4 general election. Dine Together 2nd dinner 1/2 price 200y's, 400's & O-Adv

The nation's troubled economy proved a volatile issue, with New Jersey voters opting for Kennedy, who emphasized the problem, over Carter, who the voters held responsible, an AP-ABC News poll said. The economy also was important in Ohio and California. Ohio voters had a higher opinion of Carter's work, however, and were more troubled by questions about Kennedy's character, the poll said. Reagan had an active opposition in the same GOP primaries. He held a Los Angeles victory party. "The road has been a long one and the mountain seemed pretty tall at times. But we've made it to the summit. Now, there's another one out there and our march begins again." As soon as it was clear from the returns Tuesday night that he had the delegates to push his total above the 1,066 needed for the Democratic nomination, Kennedy's effort to shake loose Carter Geranlums 1/2 off Dittner's Greenhouses, 16th & High-Av.

Carter joined 300 cheering supporters at a victory party at "The Buck Stops Here," a bar near the White House. "As I stand before you, I have one deep feeling in my heart," said Carter. "That is thanksgiving to all of you who turned what eight months ago was a prediction of absolute defeat into a wondrous victory tonight." But a down block away, another celebration was underway at the Kennedy headquarters. The Massachusetts senator, his wife and children at his side, claimed a "clear majority" of the votes cast in the final primary election day of the 1980 campaign "despite all the predictions that we could not win." Kennedy repeated his offer to free his delegates at the convention if Carter would debate him. Carter has rejected the challenge. Kennedy's effort to shake loose Carter Carter won 84 delegates and Kennedy 77.

Kid's Day June 5th & 6th at Hixley Dairy, 5th & Adams. Hot Dogs, Cotton Candy, Sno Cones. Register for Free Prizes — Adv