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(Neb.)-Chadron Not Included In Weekend Tornado Warnings

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 05/20/2013 11:25 AM

(Chadron)-The KCSR/KBPY listening area had its first round of severe weather over the weekend, with two days of tornado warnings for Dawes County. John Griffith with the National Weather Service in Cheyenne says that the storm Friday afternoon, which had spotters indicating funnels, was not a particularly impressive storm.

The storm was somewhat benign looking but the NWS issued statements saying to keep an eye on it. Griffith said the tornado warning was issued after reports of funnels were received from the Chadron dispatch area. He said it was not the super-cell type of storm that produced tornadoes in Texas and Oklahoma over the weekend, but none-the-less, it ended up producing a tornado.

Griffith points out that although the storm was in Dawes County, the warning did not cover the entire county due to changes made to the NWS warning system over the last few years.

About three years ago the NWS went to what is called polygon warnings. Warnings used to include the entire county, but officials wanted to reduce the area included in the warnings. If a storm was by Crawford, and someone was north east of Chadron, there would be no need for that person to seek shelter. The new system will keep people from needlessly going to their tornado shelters if they don't need to go there.

The warnings issued for both the Friday afternoon storm and another storm on Saturday were issued for differing reasons, as Griffith explains.

The tornado warning on Friday was issued at 3:49 pm for Western Dawes County. It was located northwest of Whitney Lake, moving to the north at 15 MPH. The warning on Saturday was issued at 4:12 pm for Southern Dawes County. It was a significant storm with some radar indicated rotation. Griffith said it also indicated large hail. However, the city of Chadron was not included in either of the warnings.

Griffith said his office has not received any reports regarding the severe weather in Dawes County from Saturday, and encourages anyone who might have reports to call their office. Griffith encourages everyone to be prepared for severe weather by having a NOAA Weather Radio, listening to local radio or television, and checking the internet to see where watches or warnings are issued. He also encourages people to have a plan should warnings cause people to seek shelter.