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Cindy Wilson texts to friends after her home was destroyed in the afternoon tornado. Cindy and her husband, Staff Sgt. B. Wilson, took cover in their home's bathtub when the tornado hit. Cindy received a deep gash to her forehead and her wound was treated by first responders at the scene. Tornado caused extensive damage in the Madison Place Addition, near SE 8 and Tower in Moore, on Monday. AP photo/The Oklahoman, Jim Beckel

By EARL WATT • Leader & Times Few cities in the world could have been more prepared for a tornado than Oklahoma City after the midwestern community was ravaged in May 1999 by the first-ever F-5 cyclone that ripped a path through that town.

But all of that preparation meant little Monday when yet another cell of storms slammed into OKC suburb Moore, Okla., creating the most devastating damage from a tornado in U.S. history.

Former Liberal resident Logan Rine moved to Oklahoma City in 2008 and despite the plans and warnings, an unrelenting tornado created a new level of destruction.

“We have plans for storms like this,” Rine said. “And we are very well informed, but days like (Monday) let you see no matter the amount of planning, nothing is for sure. It is in this mindset here that no matter how much you plan, when it is your time, if you make it, you have to help clean up and try to make things better for the future.”

While the rest of the world saw the damage of the Moore tornado, Rine said that it was only a part of four straight days of severe weather in the area.

“It has been a series of storms,” he said. “It has been four days of storms. We’ve had tornadoes

for two or three days. The night before, one touched down a couple blocks away from our house here in Edmond. It was not as severe, but it snapped light poles and power poles in half. We thought the worse was over. It shut down roads for a couple days. Then they clean that up and Moore hits.”

Rine was at his office in Oklahoma City Monday working at an advertising agency, and what appeared to be a good weather day turned ugly in a matter of minutes.

“We had no idea it was coming,” Rine said. “We heard that a little bit of hail would be on its way, but we thought we had a while.”

They didn’t.

Clear skies turned dark and the hail started to pelt the entire region, for the second straight.

“We were prepared for bad weather, but not for how quick it happened,” Rine said.

Rine had already been driving through tattered neighborhoods in a car that was beaten with hail stones for two straight days, and the Moore tornado struck.

“We know from watching weather patterns the past three or four days of hail and tornadoes, we knew a cold front was pushing in,” Rine said. “It would speed everything up. That’s what made it so severe and significant was that cold front fueling the speed and kept it on the ground. It literally crossed a lake and hit land again and kept going through a heavily populated part of the city.”

Rine said that the news agencies in the area did a great job of keeping the public informed on the pending conditions, and those who had access was able to watch the tornado live as it touched down and started its path of destruction, a message that was later reiterated by the mayor of Moore.

“The news crews here are awesome,” Rine said. “They are on the storm. They give everybody a decent heads up and as quickly as they can. We keep our ear and eyes on them and the sky and wait it out.”

Even a day after the devastating storm, Rine was still watching the window. More storms were expected, and another dose of hail was likely.

Rine grew up where tornado sirens sounded routinely in Liberal, but he said to make sure and have a plan well before the sirens ever start to blare.

“Make sure before the sirens even sound, if there is a chance for them to sound, that you have taken every precaution,” he said. “If we had been warned about four days of severe weather we might have taken it more seriously. I might have taken it too lightly. May 1999, no one thought anything could be that bad. It was overwhelmingly terrible. But there has never been anything like this.

“People here the sirens, take every precaution. Don’t take it lightly, You never know how severe it is until it is over.”

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