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Parkersburg Tornado Victims Rise Up from the Rubble

One-Year Anniversary of EF5 Tornado Offers Chance to Reflect on Recovery Process

Parkersburg, Iowa (May 18, 2009) – On May 25, 2008, an EF5 tornado ripped through Parkersburg, Iowa, leveling half of the town and changing the lives of each of its almost 1,900 residents. The anniversary of the Parkersburg tornado provides a reminder of the importance of storm preparedness, reinforcing how being prepared can help families not only weather the storm but also rebuild their lives.

The twister, which the National Weather Service recognized as the state's strongest in 32 years, spanned three-quarters of a mile wide with winds of up to 205 mph. More than 40 percent, or approximately 350, of the homes in Parkersburg were destroyed leaving hundreds of homeowners wondering if they could rebuild.

Many did not have to wonder for long. Minutes after the Parkersburg tornado subsided, Farm Bureau Financial Services agents arrived on the scene to help customers assess the damage, and the company's Quick Claims Crew began to rapidly process claims. Farm Bureau Financial Services filed more than 430 property claims and more than 260 auto claims in Parkersburg after the storm.

While their insurance policy may not have been top-of-mind for many homeowners prior to this devastating storm, comprehensive, quality coverage and the quick response from their agents helped the rebuilding process begin quickly.

"You know the nice thing about Farm Bureau and the claims process we went through was that it was one thing we didn't have to think about, one thing we didn't have to worry about," said Tim Cuvelier, a Parkersburg resident who lost his home in the storm. "That was all taken care of and it's allowed us to really focus on, you know, getting our lives back together."

In addition to the experienced agents and the Quick Claims Crew who respond to disasters like the Parkersburg tornado, Farm Bureau Financial Services also helps families prepare for the unexpected with [storm preparation advice available online at SimplifyMyInsurance.com/storm](http://SimplifyMyInsurance.com/storm). For example, making sure homeowner's coverage provides [replacement cost](#), or the cost to fully replace lost property versus just paying for the current value of it, and providing an inclusive [home inventory](#) made rebuilding possible for some affected by the Parkersburg tornado.

"If I didn't have replacement cost, I would have probably had to buy another older home and double the mortgage," said Peter Boyer, who rebuilt in Parkersburg.

Parkersburg resident Mark Haren said preparing for the unpredictable by securing quality insurance can make the recovery process easier to handle.

“I think one of the nice things from our situation was knowing we had enough coverage,” said Haren. “I mean, insurance was the one thing that we really didn’t have to sit back and start stressing about.”

Today, the recovery and renewal of Parkersburg and its residents is evident as new homes and businesses rise from the storm rubble along with a strong sense of community pride.

“All the things I had before are gone but you see the progress around and you see people getting back to the normalcy of life in town, and really with a renewed spirit,” said Cuvelier.

Watch more stories about customers who weathered the Parkersburg tornado and learn how to prepare your family for the storm season at www.fbfs.com/Parkersburg.

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About Farm Bureau Financial Services

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