

Strong winds, tornadoes, threatened Wednesday

(KAIR)--Following a day of mild temperatures and strong winds, which led to the issuance of a high wind warning, the local region Wednesday evening was met with severe, springlike weather to match the unseasonable warm weather.

Tornado warnings were issued as the afternoon turned to evening, with such local, Kansas counties as Atchison and Doniphan included in the issuance by the National Weather Service.

Atchison County Emergency Management Director, Wes Lanter, told MSC News the warning was radar indicated, with radar showing rotation between the Effingham and Lancaster areas.

Although no tornado damage has been reported, Lanter said damage did occur throughout the county due to Wednesday's strong winds, with several metal outbuildings incurring damage, along with trees, power lines, power polls, and residential roof damage. Lanter added that numerous road signs, located throughout the County, are missing.

Along with the dangers brought by Wednesday's strong winds, another side effect was the strong smell of smoke, blown in from fires outside the local area.

According to information shared by the Emergency Management Offices of both Atchison and Leavenworth Counties, the strong smell possibly originated with what the release calls "large grass fires out in Central Kansas."

The release notes that the evening's strong storms, accompanied by winds with reported gusts around 80 mph, "brought the smoke with them."

Lanter told MSC News there was "dense smoke across the county from wildfires to the west and south of Atchison County."

The smell of smoke, along with a dense haze, blanketed the City of Atchison Wednesday evening, where some areas were left in darkness due to power outages caused by the evening's storms.

While the downtown area joined much of Atchison in remaining lit, some areas went without power for hours, including several major intersections, such as 6th and U.S. Highway 59, meaning the loss of power to traffic signals. The traffic lights were replaced with temporary stop signs to control traffic, as businesses in

that corridor, including fast food restaurants and a full-service pharmacy, closed early for the evening.

Atchison's Walmart was also found to have closed early, with the U.S. Highway 73 location left in the dark.

Power was restored, at least in some locations, around 11:00 Wednesday night, nearly five hours following the start of the outage.

Earlier in the day, prior to the arrival of the storms, crews faced the dangerous winds as they battled an early afternoon Doniphan County grass fire along the east entrance to Troy, with the smoke leaving low to no visibility along nearby U.S. Highway 36.

Many Signals Communications