



NEWSLETTER

April – June 2025

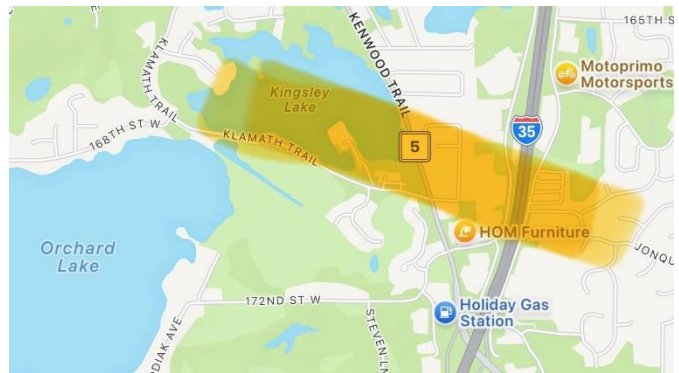
THE DEADLY TORNADO OF 1973

One of the most significant weather events in Lakeville history occurred on May 9, 1973 when a tornado hit the northwestern part of Lakeville, destroying homes and property, injuring numerous people, and resulting in the death of a boy. Did you know? Over 85% of Minnesota tornadoes occur between May and August.

Tornado Path of Destruction

The tornado originated on Kingsley Lake, just adjacent to Orchard Lake. As it skipped across the lake, it incurred damage to residential property as well as the Chart House Restaurant. A witness reported that “the water was lifted as high as 40-50 feet and in front of the cone shaped waterspout [and] the waves were 7-8 feet high.”

The tornado touched down at least twice. As it crossed I-35, two cars were tossed off the road. The final tornado touchdown was a direct hit on the Connelly Mobile Home Park which is located on the East side of the I-35 about a half mile north of Highway 50, just next to Fleet Farm today. Dakota County had over 40 reported tornadoes from 1950-2022, but this one made an impression with its destruction in the Lakeville community.



Run to Safety

Two 5-year-old boys were playing together at the Connelly Mobile Home Park at 1:44 p.m. when the storm hit. One boy ran home, crying and afraid. The other boy ran in the opposite direction toward his home, and hopefully safety - but was killed by the tornado.

One Lakeville resident living in the mobile home park at the time shared her experience. “I was washing my hair when I heard a noise that sounded like a train: I came running out to the living room and looked out the window. It was hailing and the wind was blowing.” She grabbed one of her children and ran outside to get her other son. The wind knocked her off her feet before she got to the boy. Her family survived but were stunned by the unexpected event.



A Minnesota Highway Department Officer said he “saw debris hit the mobile home park. Debris flew as high as 75 feet in the air and [homes were] thrown as high as 30 feet.” While the tornado was relatively small, it was the debris tossed up by it that caused the most damage.

Scope of Destruction

The family of the 5-year-old who lost his life was hit incredibly hard. Not only did they lose their son, but his 2-year-old brother spent over a month in the hospital with a broken leg, and their mother suffered injuries that caused her to lose complete memory of the event. In addition, their home was completely destroyed.

Eleven people were injured on that fateful day – many of them children. They were transported to the nearest hospitals which at that time were in Farmington or Edina.



Twenty-seven homes at the Connelly Mobile Home Park were totally or partially destroyed. Residential property near Kingsley Lake as well as property at the Chart House Restaurant also sustained damage. Debris from the scene could be found scattered in parts of Wisconsin.

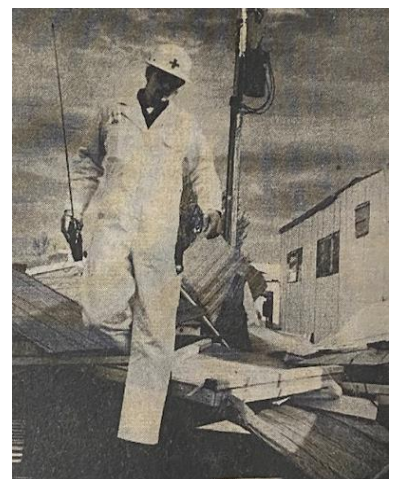
In 1973, there were farms in the area but very few residential developments. Businesses such as Fleet Farm, HOM and Schneiderman's Furniture would not be

constructed until more than 10 years later.

Emergency Response

Police responding to the incident were at the Connelly Mobile Home Park within two minutes after the tornado hit. Lakeville Police Chief Rich Rademacher directed the efforts of the Lakeville Volunteer Fire Department as well as responding emergency personnel from many Dakota County public safety agencies and the State Patrol that day.

The Red Cross established a base of operations at the scene within an hour providing meals and assistance with finding lodging for survivors.



Then and Now

Significant technology and emergency service changes in the 5 decades since Lakeville's deadly tornado have reduced the risk of death and injury due to severe weather. Some of the improvements include:

- ✓ Deployment of doppler radar
- ✓ Development of advanced weather prediction models.
- ✓ Installation of outdoor weather sirens
- ✓ Availability of cell phone communications
- ✓ Close proximity of medical facilities
- ✓ Rapid response availability of Emergency Medical Services.
- ✓ Live coverage by local TV channels

How do you stay prepared for emergencies?

Timeline

1820 - First recorded tornado in Minnesota near Ft. Snelling

1957 - First experimental Doppler radar for weather observation built in Illinois

1973 - *Tornado hits Connelly Mobile Home Park killing a 5-year-old boy and injuring 11.*

1973 - Lakeville Police Department becomes the first Minnesota public safety agency to acquire a weather alert radio

1981 - Lakeville installs outdoor weather sirens

Late 1980's - U.S. National Weather Service began deploying a network of Doppler radar.

1993 - Littlefork experiences the last tornado that caused multiple deaths in Minnesota

Watch the Video

Want to see the video?

Search "Lakeville History Moment – The Deadly Tornado of 1973" on YouTube or [click here](#)

FOLLOW US (and Like us) ON [FACEBOOK](#)
facebook.com/lakevilleareahistoricalsociety



and tell your friends! We are at

The “**Lakeville Leader**” was a weekly newspaper published from 1912 until 1930. If you have copies of the Lakeville Leader, please contact us at LAHS1995@gmail.com or 952-985-4680.

WANTED : VOLUNTEERS

Make a difference to our community's future by preserving its past.

The Historical Society is made up of a fun group of people - like yourself - who share stories and work on exciting projects that make a difference. Want to learn more about the wide variety of projects that we work on? Contact us at LAHS1995@gmail.com

**THE LAKEVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS LOCATED IN THE HERITAGE
CENTER,**

20110 HOLYOKE AVENUE, LAKEVILLE, MN 55044

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.MNLAHS.ORG