

NCDOT Responds To Tornado Disaster

Immediately following the March 28 tornados that devastated a wide area of eastern North Carolina, state highway crews of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) began clearing the tons of debris that blocked the roadway in the affected counties.

Armed with chain saws, dump trucks, and front-end loaders, personnel in the department's four highway divisions struck by the storms opened the roads for rescue vehicles trying to reach the dead and injured.

Over 760 department personnel worked throughout the night and next day to provide access to the stricken areas. Using over 500 pieces of equipment, NCDOT crews had opened most of the highways the day after the disaster.

"Without this quick response that cleared the way for emergency vehicles, there could have been many more fatalities as a result of the tornados," said Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.

"NCDOT workers have again responded admirably during a life threatening situation," Hunt said.

State transportation Secretary W.R. Roberson, Jr. praised his employees for their dedication during the emergency.

"I am very proud of the way our people responded. Most of them were out all night and into the next day providing the victims with a vital transportation link to the outside world," he said.

Nearly two weeks after the tornados hit, department crews are still on the scene providing assistance to local governments and other state agencies in the disaster area.

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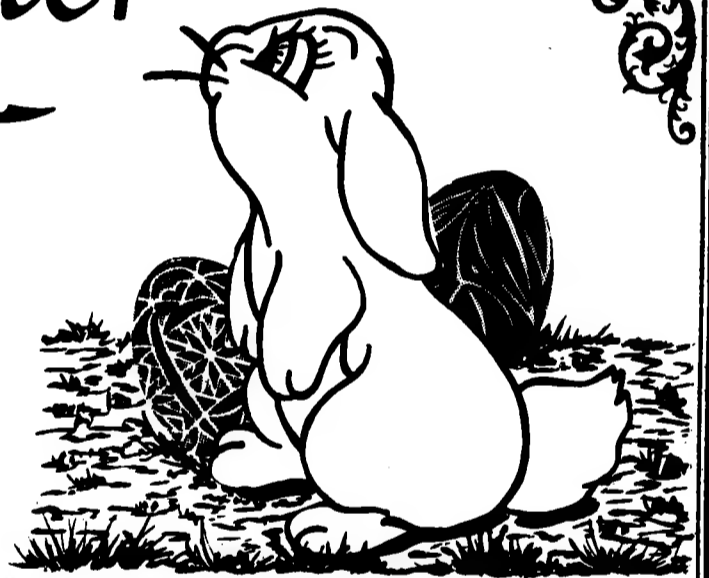
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