Montgomery County experienced an unprecedented natural disaster Memorial Day evening (May 27) when 15 tornadoes touched down in our region. The tornadoes caused severe damage to Brookville, Butler Township, Clay Township, Clayton, Perry Township, Harrison Township, Trotwood, Dayton, Vandalia, and Riverside. The largest was rated an EF4, with winds up to 170 mph.

The Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center was activated before the tornadoes even left the area, and the Board...
Life Saving Operations

Following the storm, our team’s first concern was for the safety and health of our community. The Region 3 Rescue Strike Team Coordinator immediately began supporting search and rescue operations through our Emergency Operations Center, and the team ultimately searched more than 1,600 structures and evacuated 68 people.

Director Jeff Jordan also worked with Vectren to shut down damaged gas lines and DP&L to repair and remove power lines, which helped prevent further tragedy. The Montgomery County Engineer’s Office conducted immediate debris removal operations to allow search and rescue teams and utility crews access to hard hit areas.

The magnitude of power outages also affected our water supply, leaving some areas without water and the entire system on a massive boil advisory. Montgomery County Environmental Services worked tirelessly to help keep the water system from totally depressurizing. In addition, our Emergency Operations team worked with fire departments and state officials to deploy water tankers throughout the impacted area to improve local fire suppression capabilities. By May 31, most areas had their water restored.

The Emergency Operations Center operated an Information Hotline where residents could call to get information about the various services provided and where to get help, primarily staffed by County and Public Health employees.

Relief Applications Required
Teamwork Across the County & Beyond!

Outreach efforts have been a high priority for Job and Family Services over the past year, with the creation of the JFS On the Move program that brings eligibility experts to churches, community centers and nursing homes.

The May 27 tornadoes challenged us to quickly ramp up our efforts, and JFS responded along with other personnel from inside and outside of Montgomery County. In the weeks following the disaster, we deployed a total of 78 people to 33 locations.

In addition to Family Assistance staff and JFS new hire trainees, this included people from Children Services, Child Support, and Services Integration
and Training. We also enlisted staff from Human Services Planning and Development and the Office of Reentry. It was truly collaboration at its best. In fact, 14 employees from Greene County JFS even pitched in to help!

The effort to take Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Replacement Applications required some quick training for people who were not eligibility experts, but we also kept our experts from Family Assistance very busy. Ruth Todd deserves a big thank you for her efforts to coordinate this outreach to affected neighborhoods!

Most relief applications were received at The Job Center. In all, we received a total of 610 applications for vouchers to replace essential household items like clothes, furniture and major appliances; and 8,996 replacement SNAP applications.

We’d like to thank everyone who pitched in to help us get much-needed assistance to tornado victims!

We sent our staff out to the shelters and food and water distribution centers to help victims by providing information resources and help with claims.

Montgomery County’s Business Services division was approved for funding from the State of Ohio for disaster response. A portion of those funds is going toward the purchase of a new Mobile Career Resource Center, which will allow Workforce Specialists to take their services on the road. The Mobile Career Resource Center will have 20 workstations, allowing for the same employment services available at The Job Center, including job recruitment, applications for workforce-related grant funds, and one-on-one resume review, to name a few.

Montgomery County’s Mobile Career Resource Center will be similar in design to the vehicle pictured at the top of this page from the Career Source of North Florida.

Purchasing and Central Services provided a crucial function during the Memorial Day recovery efforts. Their primary task was managing the resource desk inside the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The resource desk focused on acquiring the vital assets needed to meet the ongoing requirements of the community. This included obtaining generators, water (potable and non-potable), porta potties, cell phone stations, handwashing stations and other needed items. They also led efforts to dispense assistance throughout the community which involved coordinating essential services such as, water distribution sites, donation drop off locations, and volunteer assembly locations.
Debris removal was also managed through the resource desk. Hank Stanley, Building Maintenance Supervisor II, served as the debris manager and was instrumental in coordinating the machinery and resources needed with the Engineer’s Office and the many jurisdictions. In addition, the resource desk helped request assistance from the state to get the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to help with debris removal.

Printing Services, which is part of Central Services, went above and beyond the call of duty to quickly print the vital information flyers that were distributed to people who did not have electricity or internet and could not receive the notices that were posted to the website or social media. The flyers were their only means of finding out about the resources that were available to them. A big thank you to Materials Management Manager Fred Reese and his team at the Printing Services Department!

As if that wasn’t enough, Purchasing and Central Services also worked with the Prosecutor’s Office to help advise different departments with their needs. This involved appropriately contracting with different vendors for needed services.

Other staff members from Purchasing and Central Services who helped out in the EOC included Purchasing Manager Marsha Shaffer, Senior Buyer Barb Asberry, Buyer Ron Strong, and Buyer Denise Burris. Facilities Management Director Phil Miller helped as well.

A big thank you to Purchasing and Central Services for a job well done. Their work helped us navigate the initial shock and damage caused by the natural disaster, and laid the foundation for the community to eventually rally together and begin the long-term recovery process.

To provide for a little break and some camaraderie, the Recorder’s Office held a buffet style salad carry-in event on June 7. Wellness Warrior Marcia Baskin coordinated the event. After the event, the leftovers were donated to Samaritan’s Purse, a tornado relief organization. They had several bags of washed greens, some of which had not been touched, together with the salad toppings. Samaritan’s Purse had just made a social media post the day before the event, asking for produce for fresh salads. “The opportunity to reach out into the community was an unexpected reward,” Baskin said.
Sheriff’s Office Steps Up with Life-Saving Operations

The Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office had numerous on-duty and off-duty employees immediately respond to the stricken communities. The Regional Dispatch Center received an outpouring of calls from residents after disaster struck and immediately began coordinating with law enforcement, fire, and EMS crews throughout the area.

The response in all of the communities focused on life-saving measures. Deputies rescued residents from heavily damaged or demolished homes, and facilitated transport to area hospitals for treatment.

Deputies went door-to-door to ensure every resident was accounted for. This was accomplished with the assistance of neighborhood residents. Within four hours, the initial search of the most devastated areas was completed. The Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office also worked diligently with Task Force One Urban Search and Rescue to ensure the wellbeing and safety of residents. Deputies also prevented citizens from traveling into the most dangerous area, and coordinated fire, EMS, and road service crews to render aid and start clearing roadways.

During this period of time, surrounding communities brought an influx of water and food supplies to Harrison Township. Sheriff’s Deputies from Washington Township distributed supplies and cooked meals for first responders and residents in Harrison Township. When the day ended, Sheriff’s Office personnel had worked over 500 extra hours providing services to the affected communities.

Over the following weeks, Sheriff’s Office personnel continued assisting the community by providing safety and security patrols, coordinating volunteer groups, and working diligently with disaster relief organizations to provide assistance to displaced residents.
Public Health Activates Emergency Response to Meet Community Needs

Public Health has activated its Incident Management Team in response to the tornadoes that caused significant damage throughout Montgomery County. Over 125 Public Health staff have logged more than 3,100 hours to date in response to the tornado and storm damage that occurred May 27 and 28.

As part of the ongoing response, Public Health has taken the following steps:

• Coordinated with Montgomery County’s Emergency Operations Center
• Notified the public about health concerns regarding water, asbestos and open burning
• Provided guidance and inspections for local food service operations
• Conducted environmental health inspections of shelters
• Increased mosquito trapping in affected areas
• Inspected debris disposal sites
• Assisted with the Montgomery County information hotline

• Provided free birth certificates at select locations
• Provided free shot records
• Provided free cribs at select locations
• Provided free Hep A vaccinations at select locations

Public Health, in coordination with ADAMHS, opened a Family Assistance Center at 1500 Shiloh Springs Road in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Over 1,600 families were served at this location. The Public Health Mobile Unit also provided services at 9 different locations throughout the county.

Other service providers included: ADAMHS, the American Red Cross, St. Vincent de Paul, Ohio BMV, Community Action Partnership and more.

As the tornado recovery efforts continue, Public Health will work to ensure the health and safety needs of Montgomery County residents continue to be met.
Animal Resource Center Redistributes Emergency Pet Supplies

In the days following the Memorial Day tornadoes, the Animal Resource Center received an incredible amount of support from the community. While under the boil advisory, the ARC couldn’t wash its towels and sheets. When they put a call out for help, donations of towels and sheets inundated the center.

Cooperative Business Services of Cincinnati donated over 600 pounds of food (canned and dry), treats, cat litter and bottled water. A couple from Cincinnati stopped by with their dog Trooper to donate many items they’d just taken in for a fundraiser for tornado relief. Trooper is a pup who was abandoned in a Cincinnati park, wandered over some train tracks, and was hit by a train. He lost both back legs, his tail, and one eye. He was taken in, and he’s now a spokesman (or spokesdog) for animal neglect and abuse.

The donations came through Trooper, but they were donated by The Urology Group. (Learn more about Trooper at https://www.facebook.com/whatatrooper/)

On top of these, the ARC saw many individuals and families who care deeply for the animals in the shelter step up to help.

With so much support and more supplies than needed for the animals at the ARC, the Animal Resource Center opened its doors to the tornado-affected pet owners. Anyone who needed help was encouraged to come to the ARC to take whatever supplies they needed for their pets.

Chief Building Official Maury Wyckoff interviewed with WHIO about the utility permit fee waiver and later about the process for getting a permit.
Community & Economic Development Partners for Business Disaster Recovery Walks

The Community & Economic Development Department, in partnership with the regional development organization BusinessFirst! for a Greater Dayton Region, helps maintain relationships with businesses across the area with a regular series of business walks. This program allows the supportive organization to get time face-to-face with business owners, and quickly connect them with resources for immediate and long-term needs.

After the Memorial Day tornadoes, the program focused on providing relief and recovery services to impacted businesses. BusinessFirst! made its first visits to companies in the affected areas of Vandalia, Trotwood, and Harrison Township. The team also coordinated with Dayton, Butler Township, and Greene County for supportive

Trooper, who was rescued after extensive injuries from being hit by a train, brought several donated items to the Animal Resource Center after the tornadoes.

Cooperative Business Services of Cincinnati donated over 600 pounds of pet food and other supplies to the Animal Resource Center after the tornadoes.
Workforce Specialists from Montgomery County’s Business Services department took their services on the road to help anyone whose jobs may have been affected by the tornadoes.

The Workforce Specialists set up at six locations across the affected areas, giving help to anyone in need. They traveled to the Trotwood Library, Wesley Community Center, the Life Enrichment Center, Salvation Army Kroc Center, Trotwood-Madison High School, and Dayton Children’s Hospital, weekdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Montgomery County Workforce Specialist Maria Padilla is one of several going out to the community to provide help to those whose jobs have been affected by the storms.

Business owners can visit https://www.businessfirstdaytonregion.com for more information.
Staff Go the Extra Mile to Ensure Safety of People with Developmental Disabilities After Tornado

As tornadoes bore down on the community, Board of Developmental Disability Services staff knew that many of the County’s most vulnerable citizens were in danger. That’s why, in the hours immediately following, DDS staff acted quickly to determine the safety and whereabouts of every person with developmental disabilities who receives services from the County.

Staff went into the stricken communities, searching for missing individuals with developmental disabilities who did not have family supports. They physically relocated some of the individuals whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the storms, along with providers, and coordinated an array of services for those affected, including:

- Providing and maintaining generators
- Coordinating and/or delivering food and water
- Salvaging and moving appliances and furniture from damaged properties
- Daily monitoring of vacant properties to discourage property damage and looting
- Offering support to provider (direct care) agencies who serve people with developmental disabilities
- Facilitating the lease of temporary housing for individuals receiving services and for provider agencies serving people with developmental disabilities
- Coordinating and carrying out cleanup efforts on properties of people served
- Providing mental health supports and services to people who were traumatized
- Communicating about disaster relief and recovery resources

In total, 179 individuals who received services from the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities were directly affected by the Memorial Day tornadoes, and 60 of those resided in properties that sustained damage.

DDS held a recognition event June 21 to honor the direct care staff who kept people safe after the tornadoes.
Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Collaborating to Help People in a Natural Disaster

Immediately after the Memorial Day tornadoes, ADAMHS team members knew the needs of those affected would be enormous and had to be addressed quickly. In partnership with the County and Public Health-Dayton-Montgomery County, ADAMHS opened a Family Assistance Center on Shiloh Springs Road in one of the hardest-impacted areas.

The center offered access to one-on-one intervention services over a three-week period to assist with trauma and mental health needs of individuals coping with the tornado aftermath. Trained specialists were on hand to help identify needs and make referrals to appropriate services. The center also served as a one-stop location for people who needed help obtaining birth certificates, immunizations, driver’s license and registration, and other vital records that may have been lost.

Other ADAMHS Outreach Efforts:

- ADAMHS, in partnership with Public Health, and the Salvation Army’s Dayton Kroc Center hosted a free community mental health education session facilitated by the Ohio Crisis Response Team.

- ADAMHS also participated in a document replacement and legal resource clinic at Sinclair Community College for people needing important documents replaced.

- ADAMHS offered information about coping with grief, including tips for talking with children to help them cope and manage stress.

- ADAMHS was invited by the Trotwood City Council to give a presentation about mental health trauma following a disaster.

Veterans Service Commission Steps Up to Pay Vets’ Deductibles

Our Veterans Service Commission (VSC) led the way by providing relief to veterans for the first $1,000 of each vet’s insurance deductible. It came to the Commission’s attention that many vets in Montgomery County could not pay their deductibles, so VSC held a special meeting within 48 hours of the devastating tornadoes and authorized the assistance. Commissioner Webb proposed the legislative policy to override VSC’s financial guidelines, so the agency could assist all vets who suffered damage.

The VSC reached out to our community partners such as Cox Media Group, Alpha Media, Lamar Advertising and iHeart Radio for community service announcements, and they all graciously helped. Our financial assistance workload went up over 1,000 percent, and we have seen Korean War veterans, Vietnam Era veterans, Desert Storm/Desert Shield veterans, and veterans through the continuing war on terrorism. Our outreach activities have truly served veterans and our mission to "connect the veteran to benefits earned."
Engineer’s Office Manages Yard Waste for County Residents

The Montgomery County Engineers’ Office was on the ground immediately after the storms passed to help clear downed trees and yard debris from roads to help emergency service personnel access hard hit areas. The Engineer’s Office also accepted yard waste and brush from local jurisdictions beginning May 31 at their 5625 Little Richmond Road location. The material was ground into mulch on site using an industrial yard waste shredder provided by Montgomery County Environmental Services.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Montgomery County Engineer for playing a huge role in debris removal. Without your staff, our emergency responders could not have helped rescue and evacuate citizens as quickly as they did.

Environmental Services Makes Quick Repairs to Manage Waste

Due to widespread power outages from the Memorial Day tornadoes, Montgomery County Environmental Services had to temporarily redirect wastewater into the Stillwater River (which flows into the Great Miami River) to minimize damage to private property and residences. Our lift stations in that area were severely impacted, and we were unable to access the infrastructure for over a day.

As soon as we were able to access the area, our teams worked tirelessly to mitigate the issue. Environmental Services worked together with DP&L, who removed the power lines, to clear the debris and assess the damage.

By the morning of May 31, wastewater was no longer discharging into the Stillwater River, and after four days Public Health said the rivers were cleared for use.
Solid Waste District Extends Hours, Reduces Disposal Fees

Much of the tornado devastation included scattered debris of both construction and demolition material and vegetation, which led our team at the Solid Waste District to quickly implement a short-term plan to help our residents manage their debris.

Within a few days after the storms, the Solid Waste District implemented a schedule to man the transfer station more frequently and announced extended hours to the public to drop-off debris and brush. Days later, the County was able to allow residents who lived in heavily-affected areas a 20% reduction in disposal costs, further helping those who needed it.

Recorder Opens Access to Free Property Deeds

The Office of Recorder Brandon McClain distributed property deeds to homeowners who were directly and substantially impacted by the tornadoes that ravaged various parts of Montgomery County.

As a result of the devastation, many citizens were faced with the challenge of having to provide proof of ownership to obtain financial resources and assistance to repair or replace their homes. In many cases, this documentation is not readily accessible. A property deed is among the best proof one can present to demonstrate ownership of their home.

Building Regulations Waives Fees for Rebuilding Citizens

Montgomery County helped the community to rebuild by issuing permits at no charge for electric and gas piping permits through July 31. The waiver was effective immediately for restoring services to properties affected by the recent storms.

Each property needed to be inspected to ensure safety when turning on the utilities, but the fees for these permits were waived.

Any questions concerning permits to ensure safe utility reconnection should be directed to the Montgomery County Building Regulations Department at www.mcohio.org/build or (937) 225-4622.

Building Regulations also waived fees for all permits and inspections for the demolition, repair, and reconstruction of buildings damaged during the Memorial Day tornadoes. This fee waiver is effective through October 31, 2019, and it is retroactive to May 27, 2019.

Property owners and businesses will still need to get permits for all demolitions, repairs, and reconstruction, but the associated fees will be waived.

For more information on building permits, visit www.mcohio.org/build. Anyone with storm damage repairs who has already paid the permit or inspection fees between May 27 and today can call Montgomery County Building Regulations at (937) 225-4622 and ask about a refund of those fees.

“After seeing the destruction caused by the tornadoes firsthand, I believed it was necessary we ensure every citizen affected was able to prove ownership of their home as simply as possible to restore their lives,” Recorder McClain said.
Human Services Planning and Development Collaborates for Successful Housing Recovery Resource Fairs

With the Sept. 3 deadline to request FEMA assistance quickly approaching, FEMA asked Montgomery County to set up two Housing Recovery Resource Fairs to focus on housing matters. The events were held Aug. 13 and 15 at the Kroc Center in Dayton and Maranatha Worship Centre in Trotwood.

Assistant County Administrator Tom Kelley enlisted his Human Services Planning and Development team to coordinate partnerships with local resource groups to better serve the communities at the events. Specialized areas included homeowner assistance, renter assistance, FEMA process, and special population assistance for seniors, veterans and persons with disabilities.

Nearly 70 residents attended the two forums, and more than 90 housing resource staffers and volunteers participated, representing 33 organizations. Homeowner topics included guidance on rebuilding/repairing, demolition, inspections, permits, taxes, utilities, insurance and financing. Renter information included temporary assistance, rights/responsibilities, housing search, public housing and transition planning to permanent housing.

“Our resource fairs were designed to create a one-stop shop for information people need to rebuild their homes or find new homes or apartments in locations that meet their needs and budgets,” Kelley said. “Housing issues from the tornadoes could last for years, and we need to provide resources that will bring citizens stability as quickly as possible.”

While the events were focused on housing, the HSPD team enlisted pros from JFS Family Assistance, St. Vincent DePaul, Catholic Social Services and Children Services to assist with non-housing questions in the Triage Room.

It was a huge effort to bring in all the proper experts in a short amount of time, and HSPD got it done in two weeks with Director Gerri Pegues and Assistant Director Jessica Jenkins leading the charge. Special thanks also to Administrative Assistant Jessica Abernathy for her coordination efforts and to all the staff involved.