



CONNECTING
ALABAMA MAY 2011

VOLUME II ISSUE 3

UP TO SPEED

WWW.CONNECTINGALABAMA.GOV

SPECIAL STORM EDITION

With no power in Northern Alabama and the only gasoline, 40 miles away, Jay Fuller was only able to communicate with the outside world with his smartphone. Surprisingly enough, using Facebook, he was able to relay his equipment needs to other WISPs.

NOAA Storm Statistics From April 27, 2011

- The NWS Storm Prediction Center issued severe weather outlooks five days in advance and tornado watches hours in advance.
- NWS Weather Forecast Offices issued life-saving tornado warnings, with an average lead-time of 24 minutes. NWS issued warnings for more than 90 percent of these tornadoes.
- April 27 - 28, 2011 The NWS estimates there were a total of 312 tornadoes.
- The largest previous number of tornadoes on record in one event occurred from April 3-4, 1974, with 148 tornadoes.
- April 27, 2011, is the deadliest single day for tornadoes (est. 340 lives lost) since the March 18, 1925, tornado outbreak that had 747 fatalities across 7 states.
- The previous record number of tornadoes during **any month** was 542 tornadoes set in May 2003.
- The average number of tornadoes for the month of April during the past decade is 161.

* [National Weather Service](#)

IMPORTANCE OF BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY IN EMERGENCIES IS REALIZED

COWs BROUGHT TO STORM RAVISHED AREAS

While livestock is known to be grazing in elite neighborhoods, these COWs are actually “Cell on Wheel” technology devices utilized by cellular service providers to bring communication capabilities to emergency personnel, local governments and even individuals who otherwise have no means to relay vital information or reach family members during the aftermath of the devastating tornadoes of April 27, 2011. The following articles convey the efforts of many service providers that have been instrumental in helping Alabama.

- [SouthernLINC Wireless Aids Restoration Efforts in Storm-Damaged Southeast](#)
- [Sprint Foundation Donates \\$100,000 to Help Tornado Victims](#)
- [AT&T Deploys Network Disaster Recovery Teams in Alabama](#)
- [Verizon Deploying COWs and Generators](#)

THE TECHNOLOGY YOU NEED TO SURVIVE A [TORNADO]

After tornadoes left over 300 dead in just a 24 hour period those across the country are now aware that technology, email, text alerts, and weather radios prevented an astronomical death toll. Some of the supercell storms from Wednesday were so extreme that if anyone in their path didn't adequately seek shelter they would not survive. By a miracle, highly visible tornadoes during the day Wednesday combined with media coverage saved many whom are counting their blessings today. ... [Read Full Story](#)

COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE ALABAMA TORNADOES

This pattern [tornado sirens sounding every few minutes] was repeated many more times but I had no worries because the TV forecasters were on top of the news and the most detailed maps available told me exactly where the funnel clouds were located. But when the power went out and the Internet went down, my Blackberry was the only source of news. ... But then I found myself running to my car to charge my phone battery and that was a problem. [Read Full Story](#)

NATIONWIDE WISP EFFORT ASSISTS CULLMAN, ALABAMA WISP DAMAGED BY TORNADOS

The following day after Cyber Broadband's main distribution tower was folded over by a tornado, the WISP community banded together to make sure they took care of one of their own. Cyber Broadband is located in the small town of Cullman, Alabama A large tornado cut a swath through town destroying many businesses, homes and buildings on April 27th. ... [Read Full Story](#)



NOTICE: Resources are clickable links to various Web sites. This is for informational purposes only. We are not responsible for content. Be aware that some sites are reporting server errors due to too much activity. Also, news stories might be archived in the near future.

ALABAMA RED CROSS AGENCIES

- [Bibb](#) [Jefferson](#)
- [Blount](#) [Lamar](#)
- [Calhoun](#) [Lauderdale](#)
- [Chambers](#) [Lawrence](#)
- [Cherokee](#) [Limestone](#)
- [Chilton](#) [Madison](#)
- [Clay](#) [Marion](#)
- [Cleburne](#) [Marshall](#)
- [Colbert](#) [Morgan](#)
- [Coosa](#) [Pickens](#)
- [Cullman](#) [Randolph](#)
- [DeKalb](#) [Saint Clair](#)
- [Elmore](#) [Shelby](#)
- [Etowah](#) [Talladega](#)
- [Fayette](#) [Tallapoosa](#)
- [Franklin](#) [Tuscaloosa](#)
- [Greene](#) [Walker](#)
- [Jackson](#) [Winston](#)

[American Red Cross of Central Alabama](#) (Montgomery)

[American Red Cross of Northwest Alabama](#) (Florence)

[Birmingham Area Chapter](#) (Hoover)

[Cullman County Chapter](#) (Cullman)

[Etowah County Chapter](#) (Gadsden)

[Madison/Marshall County Chapter](#) (Huntsville)

[Morgan/Lawrence County Chapter](#) (Decatur)

[Talladega County Chapter](#) (Talladega)

IN THE NEWS

SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS RETURN PERSONAL PROPERTY



One Facebook Group has gained statewide and national media attention. These articles portray the important role social media has played in returning personal property belonging to tornado victims. Many items have traveled more than a hundred miles before landing in other counties or states. As of May 3, Tuesday morning, the Facebook Group, [Pictures and Documents found after Apr 27, 2011, Tornadoes](#), has more than 2,000 images uploaded. Many of which are finding their way back to rightful owners or family members.

[Tornado treasures returned through use of social media](#) (Tulahoma News)

[What Tornadoes Carried Off, Facebook May Help Return](#) (Forbes)

GOOGLE RELEASES ALABAMA TORNADO DESTRUCTION IMAGES AND MAPS OF TORNADOES

Google has posted before-and-after images of the terrible devastation left behind by the tornadoes that hit the South and parts of the East Coast of the United States earlier this week, with close-up views particularly of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. [Read Full Story and View Pictures ...](#)



AUBURN ORGANIZATION LEADS RELIEF EFFORTS

An effort that began as a way to return the generosity Alabama fans showed toward Auburn University earlier in the year has now become a grassroots phenomenon. Toomer's for Tuscaloosa is helping those who have been affected by the deadly tornadoes that devastated areas across the state Wednesday.



"We've pretty much become a nationwide organization at this point," said Warren Tidwell, an Auburn resident and organizer of the Facebook group. Among the states already signed up and organized to send supplies are Georgia, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Colorado, Pennsylvania and Maine. Groups were called to action and organized through the popular social media sites Facebook and Twitter.

"Wednesday night at 8 p.m. I got online and started the group, which was of course inspired by the act of Alabama fans. It was so classy of them to raise money. I had hoped for a big response, but I had no idea it would be as big as it's been. It's gotten really crazy." [Read Full Story ...](#)

EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

Disaster survivors with DIABETES

call 1-888-DIABETES or
(205) 870-5172 to be
connected to your local American
Diabetes Association (ADA) office.
~ [Alabama Department of Public Health](#) ~

**Alabama Department of
Homeland Security**
(334) 956-7250

**Alabama Emergency
Management Agency**
(205) 280-2200

**The Governor's Office
of Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives**
(334) 242-7110
(877) 273-5018

Alabama Citizen Corps
(334) 242-7110

Salvation Army
(Birmingham)
(205) 328-2420
Emergency Assistance:
(205) 328-5656
Picked Up or Drop Off locations:
205-252-8151

211 Connects Alabama
Call 211 or 1-888-421-1266

Alabama's Statewide 2-1-1
Volunteer Call Center is a 24/7
volunteer and donations hotline
that provides an opportunity for
people to connect to available
options. Individuals can register
to volunteer or provide a financial
donation to the Governor's
Emergency Relief Fund.

DISASTER RELIEF RESOURCES

DONATION DROP POINTS AND NEEDS

[City of Tuscaloosa](#) (Facebook – status updates posted regularly)
[Alabama EMA](#) (Facebook)
[Alabama 2011 Tornado Lost or Missing](#) (Facebook)
[Salvation Army Needs](#)
[Pray for the Tornado Victims of April 27, 2011](#) (Facebook)
[Toomer's for Tuscaloosa](#) (Facebook)
[Toomer's for Tuscaloosa](#) (Web site)
[Crimson Cares](#) (Facebook)
[Pray for Tuscaloosa AL](#) (Facebook)
[Pray for Cullman](#) (Facebook)

PERSONAL ITEMS FOUND & SPECIAL NEEDS

[Pictures and Documents found after the April 27, 2011 Tornadoes](#)
[Prom Dresses for Tornado Victims](#)
[Tide Loads of Hope](#) (clothes washing)

PETS & LIVESTOCK

[Greater Birmingham Humane Society](#) (also helping Tuscaloosa)
[Animals Lost & Found in Alabama Tornadoes](#)
[Animals Lost & Found from Alabama Tornadoes 4/27/11](#) (Facebook)
[Alabama Horse Council – Storm Assistance for Horses](#) (Facebook)
[Stolen Horse International, aka NetPosse.com](#)

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

[List of Alabama Tornado Casualties](#)
[Storm Aid – Resources and Information](#)
[USDA Food Safety Tips](#)
[Federal Disaster Assistance](#)
[FEMA Information](#)
[Volunteer with Connect 211](#)
[Christian Service Mission](#) (donations and volunteers)
[Disaster Relief Agencies](#) (list of agencies)
[Alabama Baptist Mission](#)
[Salvation Army Volunteers](#) (PDF)
[Alabama Possible](#)
[Samaritan's Purse](#)
[Deaf/HoH Alabamians - Tornadoes](#) (Facebook)
[ADRS- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services](#) (Facebook)
[Torpedos against Tornadoes](#) (Charlie Sheen Fundraiser)

OTHER NEWS STORIES ...

[TDS® responding to tornado damaged areas in Alabama and Tennessee](#)
[Lack of Broadband Hindered Spread of Storm Info](#)
[Social media tries to help during tornadoes, but was the message being heard?](#)
[Are You Being Gouged at the Gas Pump?](#)
[Tornadoes and Thunderstorms Keep Radio Amateurs Busy in Midwest, Southeast](#)
[WISPA Announces Disaster Relief Fund, Sends Aid to Cullman, Alabama](#)

TIP: sign up for free
email and text alerts from
local media. They will
send you weather
watches and warnings
directly to your cell
phone and sometimes
can even call your home
phone number alerting
you of threatening
weather conditions.
~ [9-1-1magazine.com](#) ~

Find us on the Web!



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ConnectingALABAMA
401 Adams Avenue, Suite 524
PO Box 5690
Montgomery, AL 36103
Phone: 334-353-5682
Fax: 334-353-3743
E-mail: info@ConnectingALABAMA.gov

bringing Alabama up to speed!



Find us on
Facebook

twitter

Get Involved!

We need YOUR feedback!

This success of this initiative is directly influenced by consumers utilizing the tools provided through **ConnectingALABAMA!**

Please visit the Web site and view the [VIDEOS](#) to learn more about how broadband access directly affects your community.

Then provide [FEEDBACK](#) so we can collect the necessary data to bring Alabama *Up to Speed!*

SmartPhone App!

Scan this QR Code, and it will link you directly to www.ConnectingALABAMA.gov



A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE WISHING TO HELP ...

There are many people across the state and even the nation who do not know what to do or how to help. It is overwhelming even for those not in the path of the recent tornadoes because you feel compelled to help your friends and neighbors. At the same time, perhaps you wonder, "But what can I do? I'm just one person."

Just remember to do only what you can do or what you are comfortable doing ... most importantly, remember that every action helps. Whether you can help with debris clean up, distribute donations, donate blood or supplies; man volunteer stations, or contribute monetarily, your efforts are much needed and even more appreciated.

There might be miles and miles of storm damage and thousands of victims, but together we can make a difference! Together, we will rebuild this great State!

Please be sure to donate any goods or money to a reputable company or nonprofit.

The Starfish Story (Original Story by: Loren Easley)

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, "I made a difference for that one."

