

President Wefald's letter to Facilities Staff

TO: Facilities Staff

I wanted to send a thank you to every single member of our Kansas State University Facilities staff. I know I speak for everyone when I say that none of us ever want to see or hear about a tornado in this area ever again. We all know the monumental damage that this tornado did to Chapman, Kansas, and to hundreds of homes in the western part of Manhattan. We can all be grateful that by the time this tornado hit our campus it had been reduced to a tornado somewhere between an F-1 and an F-2.

As most of you know by now, five of our buildings-including Cardwell, Fiedler, Ward, Weber, and Bushnell Halls.were heavily damaged. But 18 other buildings on our main campus suffered some damage as well. In addition, 1/3 of the street signage, 55 light poles, and 50 streetlights were also damaged or destroyed during the storm. Fortunately, there were no injuries sustained at K-State on Wednesday night, June 11, 2008.

I do want to thank our entire Facilities staff for doing such an extraordinary job in terms of K-State.s cleanup and recovery effort. I know that many of you were up all night on Wednesday night. I know that we had over 400 people on the ground by early Thursday morning. I know that many of you worked so very hard over the weekend. I am not sure if there is any university in America that could have mounted such an incredible and monumental effort in such a short period of time.

I was amazed at the huge progress that we made just on Thursday alone. By 6:00 p.m. on Thursday night, we had already picked up truckloads of insulation, trash, and debris from the tornado. By 6:00 p.m., all of the roofs on the four major buildings already had temporary roofing in place. On Friday, we continued to make more progress on every front. Many of you continued to work very hard on the cleanup and the tree trimming and the tree hauling on Saturday and Sunday.

We already have hired a number of roofing subcontractors; heating and air conditioning subcontractors; and window subcontractors. We are in the process of getting help from some additional tree trimming subcontractors. We will be hiring more students to help us in the cleanup between now and the time school starts. We also will be hiring some power washing companies so that we can clean up our buildings and our sidewalks and parking lots.

Again, I want to thank our entire Facilities staff. You have marvelously responded to this major crisis and this major challenge. You have demonstrated the spirit of K-State Proud. We are a team here at K-State and we are a family. I do not think any university in America has a better Facilities staff. Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and determination. K-State is all about hope and getting the job done. I know that by August 15, 2008, we will have our campus at least back to where it was on June 10, 2008. Our goal is to have an even more beautiful and clean university campus. Thank you for all you do.