

GREENSBURG KANSAS



Commemorating Our Community
Restored, Rebuilt, Reimagined.

May 4, 2007 Tornado 10 Years Later

www.visitgreensburgks.com



*This 10-year look back is dedicated to those who
have lived in and loved Greensburg.*

May 2017



GREENSBURG

THE SMALL TOWN REIMAGINED



On May 4, 2007, our community was virtually leveled by an EF-5 tornado. Twelve lives were lost and 95% of the town was destroyed. Now, 10 years later, we come together to memorialize those we lost and to celebrate the tremendous success of Greensburg's rebirth.

The rebuilding of Greensburg has been a challenge. But it's also been very rewarding. In the face of great adversity, we have forged ahead to bring back our community, focusing on environmental and economic stewardship as we rebuild.

Throughout our journey, we have been blessed to have the assistance of Greensburg residents, business owners, friends, neighbors, other Kansans, thousands of volunteers, not-for-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, and state and federal agencies.

We cannot begin to say 'Thank You' enough. We have been humbled so many times by the generosity of others. Without the countless volunteer hours, financial support, donations and hard work, we would not be where we are today. To all of you who have helped, you have become part of our community and we consider you to be family.

We are very proud of our accomplishments over the past decade because we have not only brought Greensburg back when many thought it wasn't possible, but we have created a legacy for future generations. Now we want to share the experience with you all. So please join us the weekend of May 4-7, 2017 to help us commemorate the renewed Greensburg, a pioneering community.

Together, we can honor the past, celebrate the present and shape the future.



Bob Dixon, Mayor
City of Greensburg

Our Tornado Recovery Story ...

In May 2007, Greensburg changed forever. An EF-5 tornado tore through our city, taking 10 lives, injuring many more and destroying 95% of the community. Some thought Greensburg was gone forever. But many dug deep to find a pioneering spirit that has helped bring Greensburg back.

Residents and countless new friends have come together through the years to build a newer and stronger community. Nothing can truly replace what we lost. What we have done though is forge ahead, look to the future and improve on what we had.

Today, Greensburg is one of the greenest cities in the United States.

Our homes, businesses, churches and government buildings have been repaired or rebuilt— many with ‘green’ features that include energy efficiency, water-saving measures and environmentally friendly landscaping. These changes not only save money, but they are a model for sustainable living that helps the environment, our community and the state of Kansas.

As of May 2017, Greensburg has the most LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings per capita in the world. Our 5.4.7 Arts Center was the first LEED-Platinum certified building in the state of Kansas, thanks to a partnership with the University of Kansas. Much of our other rebuilding has followed suit, using environmental efficiency.

Ten years later, our community rebuilding continues. The journey we began in 2007 has charted a course that will ensure a good quality of life, and that Greensburg will be around for generations to come in a way that honors our pioneers— then and now.



May 16, 2007

Photo Greg Henshall/FEMA



Photo City of Greensburg



Photo Barb Sturner/FEMA

“The people of Greensburg lost everything...Yet they were grateful for what they had - their lives, their families, each other. What impressed me most about this rural Kansas community was their incredible human spirit. These hardy individuals rose to the occasion. Despite their loss, the townspeople stood strong.”

Duane Hallock, public affairs supervisor, American Red Cross, Kansas City

Our City Changed Forever

In the hours of darkness that followed the strike of an EF-5 tornado, residents knew it was bad. When day broke the next morning, the scope of the impact became clearer. Here is a look at what was left behind ... and the new beginning to come.



Greensburg High School



Downtown Greensburg



Photos Fire truck, Roger Benson/FEMA; all other photos this page Greg Henshall/FEMA

In Memoriam

Robert "Tim" Buckman
March 9, 1961-May 4, 2007

Larry Hoskins
August 23, 1955-May 4, 2007

Ron Rediger
June 16, 1949-May 4, 2007

Richard Fry
Aug. 23, 1944-May 4, 2007

Evelyn Mae Kelly
July 27, 1931-May 4, 2007

Harold Schmidt
Dec. 20, 1929-May 14, 2007

Alexander "Junior" Giles
May 27, 1922-May 4, 2007

David Lee Lyon
October 30, 1958-May 4, 2007

Sarah H. Tackett
March 20, 1954-May 6, 2007

Claude Hopkins
January 16, 1928-May 4, 2007

Colleen Panzer
August 8, 1929-May 4, 2007

Beverly Volz
June 15, 1954-May 5, 2007

Starting Over

"Everything you can think of that makes up a town has gone—except for the people. But, you know, Kansans are pretty resilient. There will be a period of mourning and grief, and then the rebuilding will be underway."

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius



Greensburg May 7, 2007

Photo C. McDermott/FEMA



Photo Michael Raphael/FEMA

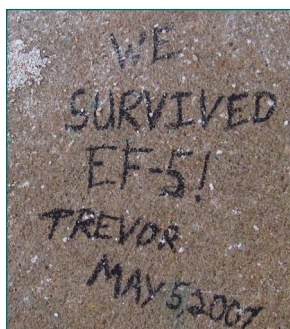


Photo Crystal Payton/FEMA



Photo Michael Raphael/FEMA

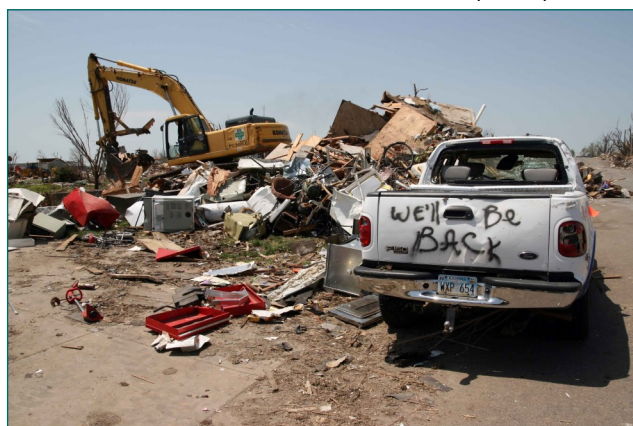


Photo Greg Henshall/FEMA

Greensburg 2007 Tornado Facts

May 4, 2007, EF5 tornado destroyed 95% of Greensburg, population 1,300;

- ♦ Tornado hit at 9:45 p.m. with 205 mph winds;
- ♦ Sirens blew in Greensburg about 20 minutes before the tornado hit town;
- ♦ Tornado on the ground more than 28 miles for about 65 minutes with a maximum width of 1.7 miles;
- ♦ Ten (10) fatalities within Greensburg city limits, one in rural Pratt County and one in Stafford County;
- ♦ More than 1,400 homes and businesses damaged or destroyed;



Downtown Greensburg —Main Street

Photo Rocky Preble

- ♦ Declared a major disaster on May 6, 2007 by President George W. Bush, triggering federal resources from a number of agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Small Business Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
- ♦ More than \$100 million in federal assistance was provided for emergency response, temporary housing, assistance to individuals, families and businesses, and repairing or replacing tornado-damaged public infrastructure such as government buildings, schools, emergency services and a hospital;
- ♦ Other federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program and the U.S. Department of Energy also played a key role in long-term recovery;
- ♦ A grass-roots community rebuilding effort, guided by a FEMA long-term recovery team, held visioning meetings and helped develop a plan to chart Greensburg's future and jump-start rebuilding;
- ♦ Countless voluntary agencies and private-sector partners contributed food, time, money and materials to support rebuilding. In May 2007 alone, the American Red Cross served 39,172 meals;
- ♦ More than 7,600 volunteers registered via AmeriCorps to help clean up and rebuild Greensburg;
- ♦ About 75,000-80,000 truckloads of tornado-generated debris—totaling more than 800,000 cubic yards— were hauled from Greensburg;
- ♦ President Bush visited Greensburg twice in the first year—initially five days after the tornado, and again in May 2008 to speak at the high school graduation ceremony.

Our City Today

Out of tragedy, came hope, vision and an unwavering commitment to pioneer a new community. So we built it. We broke ground time and again, leaving behind what we knew, for the promise of what could be.

Greensburg would not be what it is today without the generous hearts of others. People who responded immediately after the tornado. People who donated. People who toiled long, hard hours cleaning up. People who cooked meals. People who prayed and sent good thoughts our way. People who gave without asking for a thing in return. We can never express what those gifts have meant to us. And we will never forget those who were hurt or lost their lives that tragic night. Today, we celebrate you all. Now see what we have become.



10 Years of Rebuilding

Here's a look at the milestones of our first 10 years rebuilding Greensburg:

- ♦ June 19, 2007— First residential building permit issued;
- ♦ June 23, 2007— First temporary housing units provided by FEMA were occupied at a community group site locally known as “FEMAville;”
- ♦ July 20, 2007 – First new home in the city occupied;
- ♦ Aug. 15, 2007 – School in Greensburg begins on time in temporary facilities;
- ♦ August 2007 – Greensburg’s Long-Term Recovery Plan completed;
- ♦ Dec. 19, 2007 – Greensburg City Council passes resolution to build city facilities to LEED Platinum certification;
- ♦ March 17, 2008 – University of Kansas architecture students deliver 5.4.7. Arts Center building;
- ♦ May 3, 2008 – Ribbon cutting, new Greensburg water tower. This was significant as it served as a visual beacon of hope and rebuilding for the community;
- ♦ May 4, 2008 – The 5.4.7 Arts Center opens, representing the first LEED Platinum building in the state of Kansas;
- ♦ May 1-4, 2008 – *CBS Early Show* broadcasts live each morning from Greensburg. CBS also completes renovation of The Big Well Park and hosts REO Speedwagon concert;



5.4.7 Arts Center Photo City of Greensburg



Photo Kiowa County Media Center

- ♦ September 2008 – ‘New York Says Thank You’ Foundation visits Greensburg to build barn fairgrounds and place Stars of Hope around town. Volunteers stitch back together the National 9/11 flag from Ground Zero on the seven-year anniversary of the World Trade Center explosions;

- ♦ February 2009 — Dillon’s grocery store re-opens;
- ♦ April 22, 2009 – Grand Opening, SunChips Business Incubator, a building designed to house and help small businesses get started;

- ♦ July 2009 — Kiowa County Courthouse opens after renovation;
- ♦ October 2009 — Greensburg City Hall opens;



SunChips Business Incubator
Photos Barb Sturmer/FEMA



Kiowa County Courthouse



Greensburg City Hall

10 Years of Rebuilding

- ♦ October 2009 — Greensburg Wind Farm opens;
- ♦ March 2010 – Grand Opening, Kiowa County Memorial Hospital;
- ♦ May 1, 2010 — Ribbon cutting, Kiowa County United retail center;
- ♦ Aug. 15, 2010 — Grand Opening, Scout Cabin;
- ♦ Aug. 16, 2010 – Grand Opening, Kiowa County Schools, a full-range, consolidated school complex housing grades pre-K through 12;
- ♦ October 2010 – Grand Opening, Best Western Inn & Suites
- ♦ December 2010 – Dedication & Grand Opening, Youth for Christ Teen Center;
- ♦ Nov. 1, 2011 – Grand Opening, Kiowa County Commons. The building houses a community library, the Kiowa County Historical Society Museum, the Kiowa County Media Center and a K-State University Extension Office;
- ♦ April 2012 – Grand opening, Kiowa County Senior Center;



Photo Barb Sturner/FEMA



Photo Kiowa County Memorial Hospital



Photo Kiowa County Schools, Photo Barb Sturner/FEMA

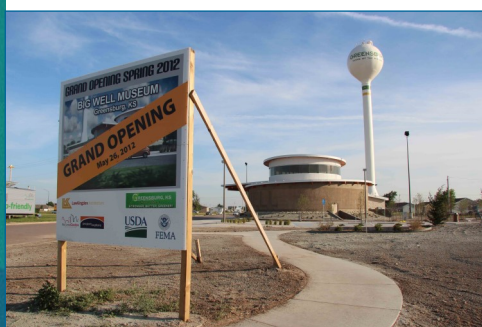


Photo Barb Sturner/FEMA

- ♦ **May 2012 – Greensburg celebrates 5 years of tornado recovery progress;**
- ♦ May 2012 – Grand opening, The Big Well Museum;
- ♦ April 2015 – Grand opening, Greensburg Twilight Theatre & Community Auditorium;
- ♦ July 2015 – New swimming pool opens;
- ♦ July 2016 – Greensburg's bike-share program begins.



Photo City of Greensburg



Photo Rosa Spainhour

Living Green

Within days of the tornado, Greensburg committed to rebuild better, stronger and greener. But what does that actually mean?

For Greensburg, it means designing and building structures that will endure for generations, and be environmentally sound. Two ways we embrace this building philosophy are by using alternative energy sources, as well as energy-saving fixtures. The results mean a more efficient use of natural resources as well as reduced operating and maintenance costs for many public buildings and homes throughout the city.

6 Ways We Put the “Green” in Greensburg



Wind Energy



Natural Landscaping



Rain capture & reuse

- ♦ Greensburg is home to the most LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings per capita in the U.S.;
- ♦ Several new buildings are built with reclaimed materials such as wood and brick, making good use of salvaged products and saving valuable landfill space;
- ♦ Greensburg is the first U.S. city to use all LED streetlights;
- ♦ Greensburg is 100% renewable, 100% of the time. All of the electricity in the city is generated by wind energy;
- ♦ We place a priority on water conservation and reuse. Throughout Greensburg, we save millions of gallons of water by using low-flow fixtures, incorporating native plantings in our landscaping and collecting rainwater that is reused in irrigation and, in some facilities, as gray water in toilets;
- ♦ Greensburg provides single-stream curbside recycling throughout the city.

Watch our Living Green in Greensburg video series on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) to learn more about sustainability in Greensburg.

Living Green

"Blessed with the unique opportunity to create a strong community devoted to family, fostering business, working together for future generations."

Public Square Vision Retreat

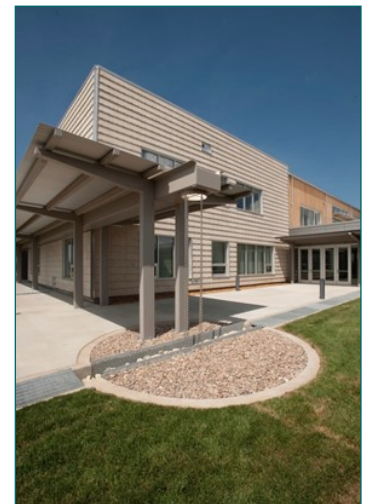
August 2007



Solar Panels—Kiowa County Commons rooftop

Photo Diamond Roofing

- ♦ Pioneer Award (Small Town/Rural) for Greensburg Sustainable Comprehensive Master Plan; Presented by Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association ~ 2008
- ♦ American Society of Landscape Architects Honor Award for Greensburg Sustainable Comprehensive Master Plan ~ 2008
- ♦ American Public Works Association Project of the Year Award for the Greensburg Electrical Distribution Rebuild Project ~ 2008
- ♦ Tree City USA Certification ~ 2009-Present
- ♦ Edison Awards Innovations and Innovators: Green Game Changer Award - Rebuilding the City of Greensburg ~ 2010
- ♦ Budget Travel Coolest Small Towns in America ~ 2011
- ♦ Siemens Sustainable Community Award ~ 2011
- ♦ United Nations Global Green Community Award ~ 2011
- ♦ BlueCHIP Healthy Community Award- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas & Kansas Parks and Recreation Association ~ 2013



Rain Capture, Kiowa County Schools

Photo Kiowa County Schools



Photo City of Greensburg



Photo Barb Sturner/FEMA