

Storms Bring Winds, Relief

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The winds came sweeping down the plains early Tuesday morning as a line of severe storms belted western Oklahoma. The storms developed late Monday night in southwest Kansas and moved southeastward across Oklahoma, leaving a trail of destruction from the Panhandle to the Red River. The Oklahoma Mesonet measured winds speeds as high as 80 miles per hour at Weatherford. Seventeen other Mesonet sites, from Beaver and Buffalo to Ringling, recorded wind speeds of 60 miles per hour or greater. Aside from typical storm damage, such as downed tree limbs and fences, the landscape was littered with broken campaign signs, coming at the worst possible time for candidates – Election Day.

Despite the damage, the storm clouds had a silver lining. More than an inch of rain fell along the path of the storms, bringing some temporary relief to a region that is suffering from a long-term dry spell. According to the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, western Oklahoma has received generally between half and three quarters of its normal rainfall since June of last year. Parts of Canadian, Grady, Caddo, and Kiowa counties, all of which received at least one inch of rain, were more than 15 inches below their normal precipitation since last June and between two and four inches below normal for this summer. Unfortunately, the storms passed too far to the east to provide any relief to Greer and Jackson counties, which remain with both the long-term and short-term dry spell.

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