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WEATHER

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH · A3



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A line of severe thunderstorms races over the St. Louis region Sunday evening. This view is looking north into Madison County from the top of Monks Mound at Cahokia Mounds.

Rain, hail, tornadoes batter St. Louis area

BY JESSE BOGAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS • A broad band of storms raged through the St. Louis region Sunday evening, with at least two reported tornadoes, intense rain and battering hail.

Initial damage reports from the tornadoes were minimal. Weather officials confirmed that a tornado forced big rigs off of U.S. 61 near the boundary between Pike and Lincoln counties about 8:30 p.m. Another tornado was reported north of O'Fallon, Mo., but officials say it caused little to no damage.

The storm triggered strong threats of tornadoes across the metro area, sending residents to their basements in areas such as St. Charles County, Maryland Heights and Madison County.

The weather canceled or delayed events throughout the region.

The Cardinals game with the Cubs at Busch Stadium started late, was then put on hold because of the weather and later resumed.

The tornado warning prompted Opera Theater of St. Louis to clear the theater at the Loretto-Hilton Center in Webster Groves. The audience was

sent to the lower floor of the building after the second act of a performance. It marked the first such evacuation of the Opera Theater's history.

The Mundy canceled its show of "Hairspray."

Later, shortly before 9 p.m., quarter-sized hail turned streets white in parts of Brentwood.

The Weather Service said St. Ann, near Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, was hit by more than 2 inches of rain in one hour.

That rain has officially made this the wettest June in St. Louis' history, at a total of 13.12 inches. The previous record was 12.35

inches, in 2003.

The sudden onslaught of rain flooded several intersections in St. Louis, with many motorists stalling their vehicles as they attempted to pass. There were also reports of downed trees in areas such as Webster Groves.

Flooding at Tower Grove Park turned much of the park into a lake by late evening.

As the storm gathered steam in mid-Missouri, a tornado briefly touched down near New Bloomfield in Callaway County.

After that, chances for storms decreased rapidly, falling to 30 percent by midnight, the Weather Service says.

Monday is expected to look a lot like Saturday — a little warmer, with the high in the 80s and only a 20 percent chance for thunderstorms in the afternoon.

In Lincoln County, officials at the Emergency Operations Command said Sunday that the levees were very saturated, but breeches were not expected. Nonetheless, people were warned to stay off and away from the levees.

Michael D. Sorkin, J.B. Forbes and Sarah Bryan Miller, of the Post-Dispatch, contributed to this report.

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