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By Mark Berman and The Washington Post National Staff

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Recovery and remembrance a year after the Moore, Okla., tornado

BY MARK BERMAN May 20 at 7:01 am



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The same stretch of land on May 21, 2013 (left) and on May 15, 2014 (right). (AP)

On a quiet Monday afternoon in Moore, Okla., a year ago, [the tornado struck](#). It would arrive shortly before 3 p.m. in the suburb of Oklahoma City and not dissipate until it had finished [carving up a path](#) that stretched 17 miles. For 39 minutes, the storm ravaged homes and schools with winds that topped 200 mph. For 39 minutes, it tore through the area, killing two dozen people, destroying more than 1,000 homes and damaging hundreds more.

The tornado erupted on May 20, 2013. A year later, the people of Moore are still recovering. People injured in the storm are [still healing](#), those who lost homes continue the work of [rebuilding](#). Like so many disasters, it was a relatively brief flash of terror and pain and danger followed by the long, slow process of recovery.

“It’s never going to be the same here ever again,” Julie Lewis, who survived the storm and had to rebuild her destroyed home, told the [Tulsa World](#). ““This is our new normal.”

Moore’s pain was visible nationwide, the damage frozen in images like this one that



blared out from front pages after the storm:

Today's front page from the Tulsa World newspaper. [#moore #tornado](#)
pic.twitter.com/nwNVp638zB

— Jim Loznicka WGCL (@LoznickaCBS46) [May 21, 2013](#)

The tornado killed 24 people — a death toll that, unusually for a destructive event like this, actually went down after authorities had time to survey the damage. The state medical examiner's office had initially said [51 people](#), including 20 children, were confirmed killed; the toll was [lowered](#) to 24 people after officials said they had double-counted the dead.

Since the tornado, there has been a push to provide all of the state's public school buildings with tornado-safe rooms. That ballot initiative has [stalled over funding](#). Meanwhile, the city has issued more than 500 permits for new single-family homes in the area that was hit by the tornado.



A neighborhood in Moore in May 2014 (top) and in the aftermath of the storm (bottom). (Top Photo: Joe Raedle/Getty Images. Bottom Photo: Tom Pennington/Getty Images)

Alise Newby, who lived near the Plaza Towers Elementary School that was demolished by the storm, [told KOSU](#) she had initially planned on leaving after the tornado.

“I know that it’s been a year and now I kind of look at it differently,” she [told the public radio network](#). “There’s a strong sense of community in Moore. Now moving away is a little more difficult.”

Moore will remember the catastrophe with a ceremony on Tuesday morning. This event will be held at the site of the former Moore Medical Center, a 45-bed hospital that was destroyed in the tornado, a ceremony that will serve as the groundbreaking for a new health-care facility. Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin (R) and city officials will talk about the tornado, its victims and what has been done in the last year.

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