

Pilger; One Year Later

By Mike Stanzel, Circuit Rider

Well, it's been just over a year since twin tornadoes ripped through this small Nebraska town forever changing its landscape. Pilger has been deemed "The Town too Tough to Die."

Although the entire water system went pretty much unscathed the tornado ripped a path directly through town taking everything in its path, including houses, grain elevators, the Co-op, the bank, the school, churches and City Hall. Other than numerous fire hydrants that were damaged from trees and debris, the wells, treatment plant and tower were spared.

NeRWA has had several training classes on dealing with the aftermath of a disaster like this, including at two-hour general session at our conference that was attended by approximately 220 people. The question and answer session was very informative and brought up some very good suggestions for future planning.

Going back to Pilger a year later I was amazed to see the new construction going on all throughout town. Prior to the tornado Pilger had 200 service connections. As of now they are sitting at 130 service connections. They have issued 44 zoning permits in the past year that include 17 for new houses. There are also plans in the works for a new community center, city hall, maintenance shop, a church, convenience store, Fuel Mart, bar and grill and a bank.

They also have received numerous grants and donations for things like tree stump removal and street repairs.

Needless to say, I was impressed to see this small town standing together and rebuilding for their future.