

CITY OF SAINT PETER HOT SHEET



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The following information is a publication of the City of Saint Peter, City Administrator's Office, 934-0663, 227 South Front Street.
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This is a special edition of the Hot Sheet – commemorating the March 29, 1998 tornado.

03/28/18



TORNADO ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY EVENT – Tomorrow (March 29th), is the 20th anniversary of the tornado that struck Saint Peter and Comfrey in 1998. During the tornado, two people (young Dustin Schneider of Saint Peter and an older man from Hanska) tragically lost their lives and we remember Dustin and his parents each year.

But there were also many blessings realized during the tornado and subsequent recovery and on the 20th anniversary it's time to look back on how our community has rebounded and thank those that came to our aid.

Many whose homes were damaged or destroyed had an opportunity to rebuild and repair in ways they might never have otherwise been able to afford. The City constructed a new community center and a new hospital. A new Catholic Church was constructed along with a new church school. Tens of thousands of trees were replanted on public and private property, and while those who went through the tornado might never live long enough to once again see the grand canopy of foliage that existed throughout the community prior to the tornado, we now have new and varied species of trees that have taken root and are flourishing.

But more so than the bricks and mortar benefits of that day, the Saint Peter community grew in ways that those who have not gone through a disaster may never understand. As others rushed to our aid that night and in the days, weeks, and months that followed, we learned how to accept help when it is offered and how to pay that help forward by coming to the aid of other communities when they need it. We continue to be grateful for the employees of area cities, the first responders (Police, Fire and ambulance), and all the regional utility providers who came here and worked long, tiring days helping to restore "normal" to our community.

Community members pulled together with everyone offering what they had to those who had lost so much. Churches opened their doors and hosted services for other religions. Neighbors went out of their way to check on the elderly and those who had suffered damages; and neighbors checked on damaged properties to prevent looting and vandalism.

And, contrary to what the experts had predicted, Saint Peter's population actually grew in the months and years following the tornado as those who suffered damage rebuilt their homes and reopened their businesses rather than moving to another community.

As we look back to that day 20 years ago, our thoughts continue to be with the families who lost loved ones.....and our thanks continue to go out to everyone who came to our aid.

And in that spirit, we invite everyone to join the Saint Peter community for a special 20th anniversary commemoration event on Thursday, March 29, 2018, at 5:15 p.m. at the Saint Peter High School auditorium (2121 West Broadway Avenue) as we come together to reflect, to honor the losses caused by the tornado, and celebrate the resiliency of the community over the last 20 years.

Hosted by retired WCCO news anchor Don Shelby, the program, "Twist of Fate: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Saint Peter Tornado," is free and open to the public, and will include reflections of the tornado and subsequent recovery efforts.

"This event is a wonderful opportunity to remember the challenges we've faced and to celebrate all the great things that have happened in this community since the tornado," said Saint Peter City Administrator Todd Prafke, who began in his position just four months before the tornado struck.

"This is also a chance for us to publicly thank the thousands of volunteers who helped in our recovery," Prafke added. "This is Minnesota, where people come together. We're excited to thank them with one voice."

Twist of Fate: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Saint Peter Tornado is sponsored by the City of Saint Peter, the Saint Peter Chamber of Commerce, the Saint Peter School District, Nicollet County, the Nicollet County Historical Society, KMSU Radio, and Gustavus Adolphus College.

1998 SAINT PETER TORNADO FACTS

Tornado on ground:	18 miles
Homes Destroyed:	400
Homes Damaged:	1,200
Trees Lost:	17,000
Total Damages:	\$120 million+
Total volunteers:	10,000

- Debris from Saint Peter was found as far away as Rice Lake, Wis. (130 miles).
- Gustavus Damage: \$60 million
- Gustavus Adolphus College reopened in 23 days and brought in a record-breaking incoming class in the fall.

More information on the event is available at www.stpeterchamber.com/tornado. *The billboard is a mock-up of a billboard from 1999 that was erected outside of Saint Peter on the one year anniversary of the tornado.

*Thank you to everyone who helped us
recover!*