Back-to-back hail storms batter homes and crops.

Shattered windows, punctured siding, ripped off branches.

Flattened corn and soybeans.

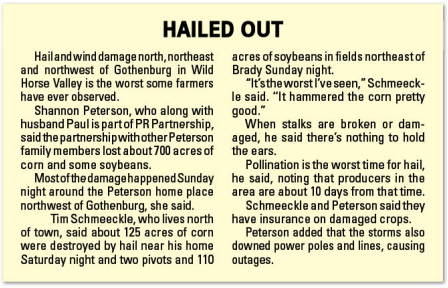
Violent storms, two nights in a row, wreaked havoc in Gothenburg and surrounding area Saturday and Sunday nights.

Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District officials recorded wind gusts Sunday night up to 73 mph in town.

Seven miles northwest of town, where hail damage was severe, a trained spotter for the National Weather Service in Hastings reported a 94 mph gust.

NWS officials described hail as golf-ball sized Saturday and the width of a nickel Sunday night.

Phones rang around the clock at local insurance agencies Monday with callers reporting damage to personal property and crops.



HAILED OUT

Hail and wind damage north, northeast and northwest of Gothenburg in Wild Horse Valley is the worst some farmers have ever observed.

Shannon Peterson, who along with husband Paul is part of PR Partnership, said the partnership with other Peterson family members lost about 700 acres of corn and some soybeans.

Most of the damage happened Sunday night around the Peterson home place northwest of Gothenburg, she said.

Tim Schmeeckle, who lives north of town, said about 125 acres of corn were destroyed by hail near his home Saturday night and two pivots and 110 acres of soybeans in fields northeast of Brady Sunday night.

"It's the worst I've seen," Schmeeckle said. "It hammered the corn pretty good."

When stalks are broken or damaged, he said there's nothing to hold the ears.

Pollination is the worst time for hail, he said, noting that producers in the area are about 10 days from that time.

Schmeeckle and Peterson said they have insurance on damaged crops.

Peterson added that the storms also downed power poles and lines, causing outages.

Crop damage was the worst in Wild Horse Valley northwest of town and to the north and northeast although producers south of Gothenburg also reported damage.

Agents estimate that 60,000 to 80,000 acres were destroyed or damaged between Brady and Gothenburg and northeast of town.

Meteorologist Ryan Pfannkuch described Sunday night's storm as more of a wind event than Saturday night when hail was more prevalent.

Pfannkuch said a weak upper level disturbance interacted with an unstable air mass Sunday as an isolated supercell storm moved in from Lincoln and Custer counties.

On Saturday, he said isolated severe thunderstorms initially developed along a surface low pressure trough to the west, producing gusts up to 60 mph in town.

Precipitation measured between Saturday night and Monday morning totalled 2.18 inches.

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