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MONDAY

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Recovery begins after tornado

At least 25 killed, dozens injured in Miss. after deadly storms across the Deep South

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG AND EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
The Associated Press

ROLLING FORK, Miss. — Help began pouring into one of the poorest regions of the U.S. after a deadly tornado tore a path of destruction across a long swath of Mississippi, even as furious new storms Sunday struck across the Deep South.

At least 25 people were killed and dozens of others were injured in Mississippi as the massive storm ripped through several towns late Friday. A man was also killed in Alabama after his trailer home flipped over several times.

Search and recovery crews resumed the daunting task of digging through flattened and battered homes, commercial buildings and municipal offices after hundreds of people were displaced.

Jarrod Kunze drove to the hard-hit Mississippi town of Rolling Fork from his home in Alabama, ready to volunteer “in whatever capacity I’m needed.”

“Everything I can see is in some state of destruction,” he said.

Kunze was among volunteers working Sunday at a staging area, where bottled water and other supplies were being readied for distribution.

The storm hit so quickly that the sheriff’s department barely had time to set off warning sirens in the community of 2,000 residents, said Rolling Fork Mayor Eldridge Walker.

“And by the time they initiated the siren, the storm had hit and it tore down the siren that’s located right over here,” Walker said, referring to an area just blocks from downtown.

The mayor said his town was devastated.

“Sharkey County, Mississippi, is one of the poorest counties in the state of Mississippi, but we’re still resilient,” he said. “We’ve got a long way to go, and we certainly thank everybody for their prayers and for anything they will do or can do for this community.”

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Mirror photos by Patrick Waksunski
Bill Bettwy (shown below) works on “The Tinkersons” on his Microsoft Surface in his Altoona home.

PASSION PROJECT

‘Tinkersons’ creator sticks with what he loves

By RACHEL FOOR
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It’s been 10 years since Altoona native Bill Bettwy brought Take It From the Tinkersons to the comics section of newspapers across the country and he shows no sign of slowing down.

Bettwy’s passion for comics and drawing started young, with his original goal being to get into animation.

Entirely self-taught, he began character and production design for animated projects.

“Nothing that ever got, you know, the green light,” Bettwy said. “I also did some character design for Sony and Mattel Interactive, a couple different places like that.”

In the background, however, Bettwy was always drawing, creating different comic strips and submitting them to various publications.

Comic years in the making

It took about 10 years of persistent submissions for a company to finally bite, Bettwy said.

“I don’t even know how many they take on now, but back then, I mean, it was one a year,” Bettwy said. “They would take out of thousands of submissions. So yeah, I lucked out.”

It was Tea Fougner, then a junior editor at Hearst’s King Features Syndicate managing the submissions pile, that pulled Bettwy’s Take it From the Tinkersons from the stack.

“For my first 10 years at King Features, Take it from the Tinkersons was the only comic we brought to syndication through the slush pile, a pretty



incredible accomplishment in a very competitive field,” Fougner, now the comics department’s editorial director, said.

Bettwy said that the funny thing about that submission was that, before, he had used “really cool envelopes” and put them in a box covered in drawings, trying to get people’s attention. The submission that Fougner selected however, was

MONDAY Spotlight

- PERSONALITY PROFILE
- Q&A
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- ON THE JOB
- COMMUNITY TREASURE

Suggestions for Monday Spotlight subjects can be sent to Mirror Managing Editor Neil Rudel at 814-946-7527 or nrudel@altoonamirror.com

The Bettwy file

Name: Bill Bettwy
Age: 50
Hometown: Altoona
Career: Cartoonist/Writer, vice president of marketing & recruiting at Ward Transport and Logistics
Family: Wife, Abby; kids Grace, Sam and Ryan; two dogs Penny and Lily

plain with only a sticky note on it with Bettwy’s name and phone number on it.

“I was almost at the point where I was probably going to quit doing it because I was just like this — it’s impossible,” Bettwy said. “And then I decided I’m just gonna throw these in an envelope, put my name and phone number in it and if they call, they call.”

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4th person found dead in chocolate factory blast

3 people still missing

The Associated Press

WEST READING — A fourth person was confirmed dead and three people remained unaccounted for Sunday, two days after a powerful explosion at a chocolate factory shook a small town in Pennsylvania.

West Reading Borough Chief of Police Wayne Holben confirmed the body of a fourth victim was found under debris early Sunday

at the R.M. Palmer Co. plant in the borough of West Reading, about 60 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

Holben asked for continued prayers from the community and vowed that rescuers and officials “will not rest until every single person affected by this tragedy has been accounted for” from the blast that occurred just before 5 p.m. Friday.

Rescue crews have been using heat imaging equipment and dogs to search for possible survivors after the blast destroyed one build-

“We’re just trying to hold out as much hope as we can to get the right answers, to get quality answers, to get information to those that are affected and then let it go over to the investigation.”

West Reading Borough Mayor Samantha Kaag

ing and damaged a neighboring building. Crews were now using heavy equipment to methodically and carefully pull debris from the site, Holben said.

Borough Fire Chief Chad Moyer said Saturday night that the chance of finding survivors was “decreasing rapidly” due to the explosion’s force and the amount

of time that had passed. Mayor Samantha Kaag said officials were “still hopeful to at least get some answers and get some recoveries so that people have that reassurance and that closure.”

“We’re just trying to hold out as much hope as we can to get the right answers, to get quality answers, to get information to those that are affected and then let it go over to the investigation,” Kaag said.

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