

By SABRINA GARRETT

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Wilson County Mayor Randall Hutto said putting a price tag on damages in the county following the EF-2 tornado that damaged two churches, 25 businesses and 100 homes early Wednesday morning would be “tough” at present time.

“When all of the clean-up is over and you look at the time added in and people who may be called in – that is when we will have a number,” he said.

While Wilson Emergency Management crews have stayed busy during the last 48 hours, EMA Planning Officer Steve Spencer said there have been no additional crews called in. “So far we haven’t needed to do that. We have used the normal crews – handled most calls that came in the crews that were working. We haven’t had to pay any of our crews overtime,” he said. “We brought down a third dispatcher to help with calls during the storm, but other than that we haven’t called in any additional part-time or overtime for WEMA.”

Hutto commended WEMA crews, road commission and Mt. Juliet City Manager Kenny Martin for being on top of damage control following the unfortunate turn of Mother Nature. “Kenny Martin really had to get up and go. I was in communication with them,” he said. “There were many house put in by the road commission too - they did an outstanding job in the morning, as well as our emergency services folks.”

Spencer said that following the storms, WEMA crews were dispatched to the damaged areas to take care of their “first priority” – life safety.

“We go around knocking on doors and making sure that everybody who lives there is okay and have medical assistance, if needed. One positive thing is that most of the damage was done with the Mt. Juliet business district at 3 o’clock in the morning – when most of those businesses

were empty. Had it been 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the storm hit we would have had several people injured," Spencer said.

WEMA will continue to focus on cleanup for the remainder of this week. "We are focusing on homeowners east of that area who have trees in their yards or on their houses. We have called in the Baptist Disaster Relief Team and the Methodist Disaster Relief Team. They are in the process of offering chainsaw teams to get the debris off their houses," Spencer added.