

# [***Interview with Gov. Kevin Stitt (R-OK)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C00-3901-JCS1-6001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

IAN OLIVER, FOX WEATHER ANCHOR: Turning our attention back to the events that unfolded in Oklahoma last night, a powerful tornado destroyed homes and toppled power lines in the town of Barnsdall. That's about 40 miles north of Tulsa. At least one person was killed and several others injured from those storms. And search-and-rescue efforts, those are still ongoing.

This is the first tornado to directly hit this community since 2008. Monday's event comes as other parts of the state, including the towns of Sulphur and Marietta, they're still recovering after being hit hard by tornadoes just last week. You may remember, Marietta, that's the only EF-4 that's been recorded so far anywhere in the United States in this 2024 spring severe weather season.

Joining us now here on FOX Weather Now, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt.

Governor, we know it's been an especially trying time for the Sooner State, so we appreciate you taking the time to join us here on FOX Weather Now.

Can you give us the latest information that you can share regarding the devastating events that occurred last night?

GOV. KEVIN STITT (R-OK): Yes. Well, thanks for having me on.

It has been a tough week-and-a-half or so for Oklahomans. I'm on my way to Barnsdall right now to put my eyes on the damage there. And, unfortunately, we lost one Oklahoman. And then, last week, Sulphur, a lot of people saw that video. And Administrator Criswell from FEMA was already on site. They have done a good job of already approving our requests.

So we will rebuild. And that's what Oklahomans do. And it's the Oklahoma standard, neighbors helping neighbors. So, we're kind of in the cleanup phase right now. And, hopefully, all the severe weather is through our state.

But our news media does a really good job. The National Weather Service is located in Oklahoma. So, we do a lot of advanced warning throughout the state.

OLIVER: Yes, and credit to those National Weather Service crews. They got these warnings out well in excess of 30 minutes, the lead time. And we know that that saves lives.

Oklahomans, as you pointed out too, a tough bunch, plugged in to severe weather setups like this. But you pointed out what's gone on over the last couple of weeks. From a resource standpoint, with so many crews pouring into other parts of the state, does it make a response to an event like this now any more challenging?

STITT: You know, we have got -- we have got plenty of resources.

And, then, obviously, the other governors from around the states have all reached out, and they have sent -- from the governor of Florida, to Arkansas, to Louisiana, they have all sent resources here. And that's what we do as Americans. We come together.

And when a state needs -- needs something, Oklahomans do the exact same thing for our neighboring states. And so we have got plenty of resources. But Oklahomans are calling me from all over, and, "What can we do, Governor?"

And they're going and cooking food. And we have got the Red Cross setting up for displaced families a kind of a dormitory setting in some of our different churches. So, we will absolutely rebuild. And the legislature is still in session.

So, if we need to appropriate funds for certain of these communities, we're willing to enable and kind of working through that right now. I just met with our legislature yesterday, and we asked for $45 million for some of the -- some funds for these -- some of these communities.

OLIVER: That's certainly great news. That will go a long way.

You mentioned, in Oklahoma, this is always an active time of the year. But these past couple of weeks have been especially brutal. Just last week, you toured Sulphur -- Sulphur and Marietta, and now this.

How are the people holding up? We have seen entire communities have their lives completely changed. Oklahomans, though, have had that spirit. Are we looking to a quick rebuild in these areas? How are the people holding up?

STITT: You know, we are.

Like, in Sulphur, for example, the Red Cross was already there. And I met some people that were displaced. And they had the dormitories set up. And then I went over and I saw it was kind of like a little community center, and they were cooking hamburgers and hot dogs for all the families, and all of the mobile health clinics that were set up in those different communities.

So, really, it's just neighbor helping neighbor. We're going to absolutely get through this. But Sulphur, you know, that kind of went through that downtown. It was a town of 5,000 people. And so there will be a cleanup and a rebuilding for some time.

But, really, I took my 10-year-old with me as we toured Sulphur. And they had just discovered the one lady that passed away there. And so the medical examiners were there. And that really hit close to home, as we were able to -- we were watching them recover a body there in that town.

So, and, obviously, when there's a loss of life, it's just unbelievable. And when you see the damage you just don't know how anybody can survive when these when these F-3, F-4 tornadoes kind of come through.

OLIVER: Yes. We have seen these heartbreaking pictures, but our teams on the ground have really displayed just some wonderful people right there in the state of Oklahoma, that spirit to make a quick comeback and help their neighbors.

Governor Kevin Stitt, we appreciate you taking the time again. We'd love to check back in. We will be following this recovery every step of the way. Thank you.

STITT: Yes, thank you so much.

And I just want to thank the federal administration. President Biden, he reached out to talk to us. The FEMA director was on site in Oklahoma. They approved our requests just instantaneously. And so, ***politics*** aside, this is when we all come together as Americans and as Oklahomans.

OLIVER: Yes, sir.

STITT: And we rebuild and we help our communities out.

OLIVER: Yes, sir, very, very important always, but especially in times like this.

Governor Stitt, thank you for being with us on FOX Weather.

STITT: Thank you.

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