

OKLAHOMA CITY — An agriculture office was destroyed and other structures were damaged, but there were no immediate reports of injuries as severe weather raked southwestern Oklahoma on Monday, authorities said. A tornado demolished the Oklahoma State University extension office and a hay barn at a dairy was damaged, Tillman County emergency management coordinator Jeffrey Rector said. A house about two miles south of Tipton was damaged, trapping the occupants in their cellar, Rector said. "We sent rescue out and got them out. There was no one injured there," Rector said. A storm chaser vehicle that got too close to a tornado was turned on its side, he said. The occupants jumped into another vehicle and continued the chase, so it wasn't known if they were hurt. Severe weather blossomed as a storm system approached the state from the west, temperatures climbed into the 70s and moisture streamed into the region from the south. A tornado watch remained in effect until late Monday for 17 counties in western and central sections of the state. Tornadoes and severe weather are most prevalent in Oklahoma in the spring, but the state has a secondary severe weather season in autumn. In 2004, six tornadoes touched down in central Oklahoma, damaging homes and businesses and at least one tornado was reported in northeast Oklahoma in November 2008. The tornadoes touched down in an area of Oklahoma hit hard by drought and wildfires this year.