

# Experiences in Monson with the June 1<sup>st</sup> Tornado

Christopher McCray  
Monson, MA

June 1, 2011 looked to be just another day tracking severe weather in Western Massachusetts. As we rehearsed that Wednesday morning for Monson High School graduation, scheduled for two days later, the air became oppressively hot and humid. Just a few hours later, something happened that I and most others in this area never would've expected. I watched in shock as a tornado touched down in Springfield, live on local news. As hail larger than I had ever experienced fell here in Monson, I went outside to watch the skies. Soon after, the unmistakable "freight train" roar of a tornado could be heard in the distance. I went into the basement with my family as the power flashed and wind picked up. As we emerged, it was clear that we had missed whatever had passed. Not until a few minutes later did I learn that a tornado had hit only one-half mile to my south.

In my presentation I will be discussing, through photos, video and anecdotes, the events leading up to and the hours and days following the June 1, 2011 tornado in Monson. This includes my experiences assisting in the recovery effort, as well as the state of the town today.

## **PRESENTER'S BIO**

**Chris McCray** is a second-year atmospheric sciences and mathematics double major at Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vermont. With an interest in weather since age eight, he began reporting weather in his hometown of Monson, Massachusetts to area news stations when he was in middle school. In 2005 he started a website covering local weather events and current conditions, [MonsonWeather.org](http://MonsonWeather.org). He was at his home in Monson on June 1, only one-half mile from the tornado-ravaged center of town. After Lyndon, he plans to go on to graduate school to eventually work as an operational meteorologist in either government or private industry.