



# **DAMAGING TORNADO: Strong winds strike Staunton Country Classic Cars, rips through region leaving wreckage**

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**SEE VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH RUSS NOEL:**

STAUNTON - A tornado and some severe thunderstorms ripped through the Staunton and Mount Olive areas and displaced some in Macoupin and Mon



St. Louis television stations were allowed into the area to document the damage, which is shown in the photographs and video. County Classic Cars are located at 2149 E. Frontage Road, Staunton, IL.

Country Classic Cars owners Russ and Anita Noel were upset about what had happened, but also remain eternally optimistic about the business and plan to immediately rebuild areas that were damaged. Russ said the business will open again Monday morning as normal and cleanup had already started Saturday night and will continue Sunday. On Aug. 8, 2017, Country Classic Cars encountered another terrible incident with a fire that damaged five buildings and destroyed 100 classic cars. Russ said the business had just finished the building construction and was completely back to normal the week before Thanksgiving and then this incident happened today.





Illinois State Trooper Butch Pool said a tornado went eastbound and did a lot of damage in the Macoupin and Montgomery area. He added that fortunately, so far, no one was hurt.

“Some buildings were upended here at the Classic Cars dealership and it was a pretty serious situation,” he said. “Our main priority is to search to make sure everyone is safe and secure and make sure electric lines are taken care of and help with the debris. Some are displaced in Macoupin County and Montgomery area. The storm was very selective in the area that was hit. Some were just in the wrong place. We encourage people to be safe and be cognizant when storms like this happen, know when they have to take precautions.”

Russ Noel said one car was turned on its side, other cars were damaged and the two buildings were hit hard. Country Classic Cars have 670 vehicles in its dealership. “I don’t know how many cars were damaged,” Noel said. “We had 210 in the two buildings that were damaged.”

“We close at 3 on Saturday and it was a blessing with the storm coming in at 4 or 5. What I say is nobody got hurt. We can repair the cars and replace them and repair the building. Nobody got hurt was the main thing.”

Russ Noel said his grandson says there is no hill for a climber and that is the way he tries to live.

“I am sure my family, co-workers, and friends will be out there tomorrow and a lot of people helping,” he said. “It takes quite a bit of an emotional toll. Our oldest daughter drove down from Chicago last year. It is a five-hour drive and she went out the next day and helped us get a calculator and a temporary trailer for an office. You don’t know how many friends you have until situations like this happen. My phone hasn’t stopped ringing since people heard about it on Facebook.

“We are going to work right through it and do it again. I will call my building contractor and hopefully have him back here Monday, get trusses ordered and of course call the insurance company. We will do what we have to do, assess the damage and be building back.

It will be a couple weeks before we start rebuilding the building, but we will open Monday morning.”

Russ Noel closed by saying: “We would open tomorrow if it wasn’t Sunday.”









