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Morning heat burst leaves damage around Wichita

by John Boyd & Brian Heap

KWCH 12 Eyewitness News

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(WICHITA, Kan.)

Thursday morning's extremely rare heat burst left its mark around Wichita.

Mayberry Middle School was damaged. A spokesperon for the Wichita school district says 3/4 of the roof over the school's auditorium is gone.

The heat burst was a hot topic on our Facebook page and Twitter feedsthis morning. Temperatures in Wichita spiking at over 100 degrees at 1:00 in the morning.

What caused this phenomenon?

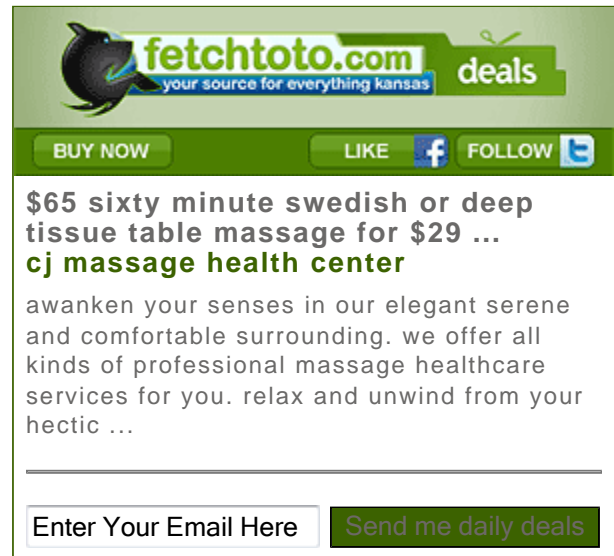
Storm Team 12 says thunderstorms high up in the sky, (meaning the bottoms or bases of the clouds are several thousand feet above the ground), begin to collapse. Heavy rain shafts race from to the ground through the very dry air below the storms and evaporates in mere seconds. First the evaporating rain dramatically cools the air making it much heavier than the surrounding air. This chilly, dense air then rushes to the ground.

Finally, once the air pounds to the ground where it's compressed in a matter of seconds, the compressed air heats up by 20 to 30 degrees in moments; a heat burst.

Even though warm air rises, the momentum from the fall is too much to overcome, so the warm shaft 'slams' into the ground.causing the burst of heat and the intense winds.

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