



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: News Media

From: Bamberg County Administration

Date: January 9, 2024

Re: Tornado Wreaks Havoc on City of Bamberg, Damaging Downtown Buildings and Small Businesses

Bamberg, South Carolina (January 2024) – A tornado touched down in the heart of Bamberg, SC, on Tuesday, January 9. While there are no reported injuries or fatalities, extensive damage has been done to downtown buildings, including the historic City Hall and local businesses.

At least four downtown buildings have suffered severe damage, and an excessive amount of debris exists in the downtown area, especially on Highway 601/Main Highway. The downtown area will remain closed until South Carolina Fire Marshals and structural engineers declare the area and surrounding structures safe. There is no definitive timeline for the reopening of Downtown Bamberg; however, County and City officials are working to restore traffic flow, and updates will be posted on our website and social media.

Bamberg County's Preliminary Damage Assessment Team will seek Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Small Business Association (SBA) recovery funds for assistance; more information to follow. We respectfully ask everyone to adhere to the structural barriers installed for the well-being and safety of all Bamberg citizens and to stay off the affected roads.

Bamberg Mayor Nancy Foster said this is something she's never seen before: "We're really sad about downtown where there has been so much growth."

Despite having his and his wife's antique business reduced to rubble, local business owner Buzzy Bunch said, "We will get together and help everyone out. That's Bamberg," assuring that this resilient community will rebuild stronger than ever.

Newly appointed Bamberg County Council Chairman Evert Comer said, "We are devastated by the damage in the heart of Bamberg County but are extremely thankful that no injuries or fatalities have been reported at this time."

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For more information on this press release, email info@bambergcounty.sc.gov.