

T-day plus two weeks

Tornado day that is. But it could also be Thanksgiving day because we are so thankful that no one was hurt in the storm and no one has been hurt in the cleanup. We are also thankful that while nearly every building was damaged, the property kept in them has been moved to the safety of our steel cargo containers. The climate controlled archive room, which contained over fifty years of Top of Georgia history, was emptied just one day before the ceiling gave way from water damage.

We are also thankful for the outpouring of good wishes, offers to help clean up, and donations to help with recovery costs. We have received donations from ten of our faithful members and guests so far. **One member has thrown down the gauntlet with a challenge to the membership to seriously consider adding to that fund. When you have matched that member's \$1000 gift they have committed to match it with another \$1000. Each of you had budgeted about \$110 for the Spring Rally. Please consider a donation of some or all of that (or more) to help us get the Top of Georgia back and better than ever. Send your check to the Top of Georgia Airstream Park, [14255 Hwy 75 N, Helen, GA 30545](#), and mark it 'Tornado Recovery'.**

The costs continue to mount. We are approaching \$10,000 in infrastructure repairs to restore water, electric, and cable services. None of that was covered by insurance. The root systems of huge fallen trees literally ripped the cables and water lines out of the ground. A pine tree smashed our commercial satellite dish. That is now all repaired to a state even more reliable than before the storm.

Last Friday was tree removal day. The tree service arrived at 7:00AM with a 30 ton and a 60 ton crane, three Bobcats equipped with claws, three chippers and trucks, and 25 workers. By 6:00PM the trees were off the buildings, cut in sections and stacked around the park. The tree tops and branches were chipped and dumped in the lower pet walk area. All that remains are stumps where our trees once stood. The cost after insurance to do all of that may reach as high as \$10,000, but it was an unavoidable expense. The park looks much better now.

This coming week we will have building contractors on site to provide estimates on repairs and replacements. The estimates will be reviewed by the Property Committee and your Board of Directors and a contract will be awarded to begin restoration.

I get calls nearly every day from members asking when they can come and help with the cleanup. Even though the Spring Rally is still cancelled, it's time to head to the Top! The Property Committee is making a list of projects and can use your help now that most areas are safe to enter. The lower campground is open. So is the main entrance. Come for the day, or bring your Airstream and stay for a while. Bring your work gloves and favorite garden tools, or your safety glasses and favorite power tools. There are plenty of opportunities for you to help.

On Day One, hours after the tornado hit, I set a target of being fully back in business by the **Memorial Day Rally**. I am **AMAZED** by how well the recovery has gone so far and am confident that we will meet that target. The buildings may not all be finished, but we hope to have the upper park open for camping, and have access to the kitchen and dining area.

It's going to be a celebration, and we need you to be a part of it! Mark your calendars today.

Bill Wild
President