



# Tornado Emergency Response

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**OHIO VALLEY GAS CORPORATION**

7/9/2026



# Who is Ohio Valley Gas (OVG)?



- Fourth largest natural gas operator in Indiana, but we're still a small company
- Approximately 36,000 customers across 23 counties in Indiana and 1 county in Ohio.
- Owns Fountaintown Gas and South Eastern Indiana Natural Gas Co.
- Customers are small towns. Largest district is Connersville-10,000 customers

# Who is here today?

## Engineering Team Members

- Zach Bower-Project Engineer
- Damon Breen-Project Engineer
- Jeremiah Buffenbarger-OQ & Training Program Manager
- Jerry Fair-Damage Prevention & Training Coordinator
- Greg Bailey-VP & Chief Engineer



March 31, 2023-Sullivan

March 14, 2024-Winchester

## EF3 Tornadoes

- Both tornadoes hit the south end of the respective towns
- Neither tornado went through the most populated area of either town
- Approximately 150 buildings significantly damaged or destroyed-Sullivan
- Approximately 47 buildings destroyed in Winchester, 110 significantly damaged
- Neither town has completely rebuilt



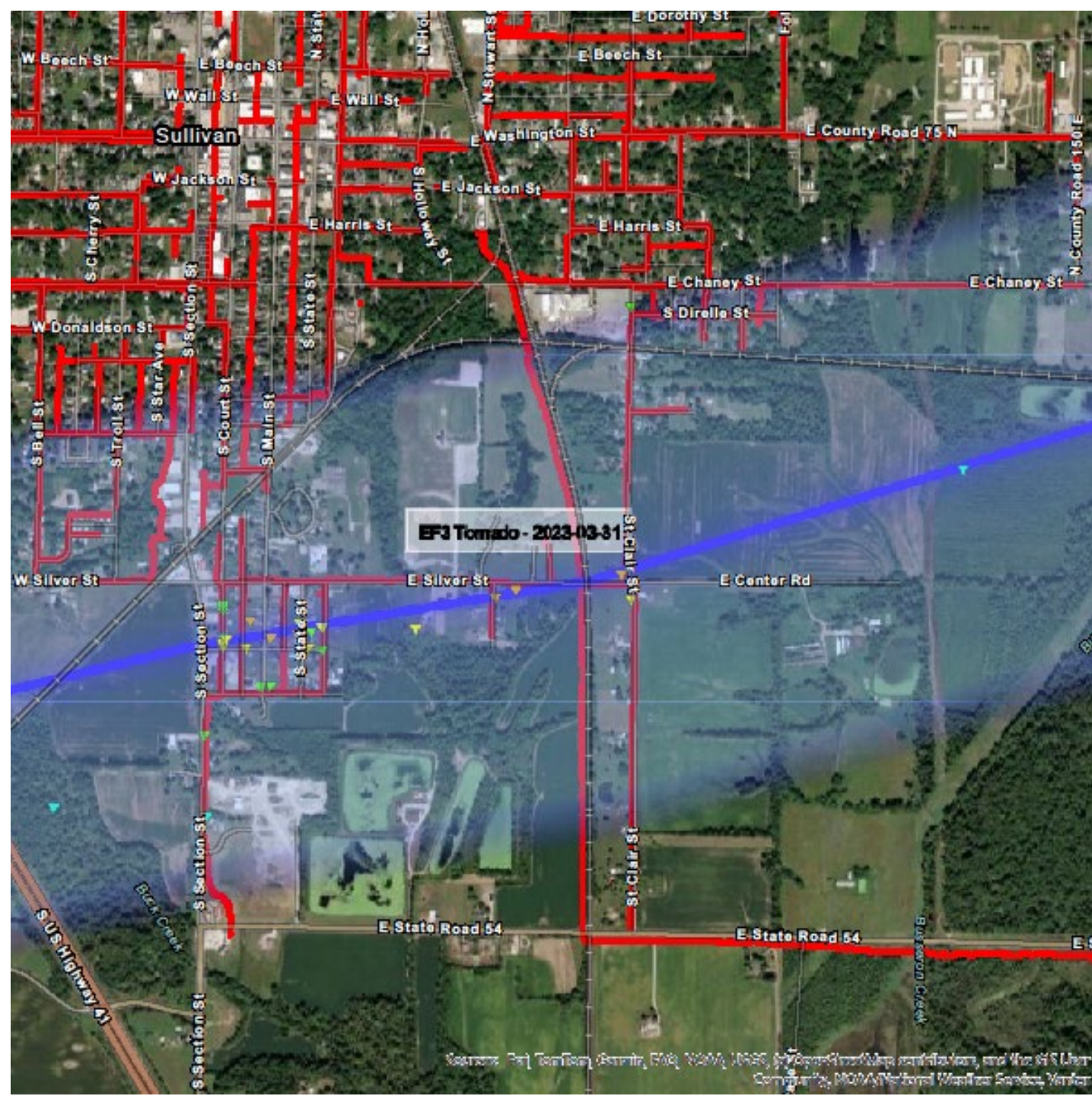
March 31, 2023-Sullivan

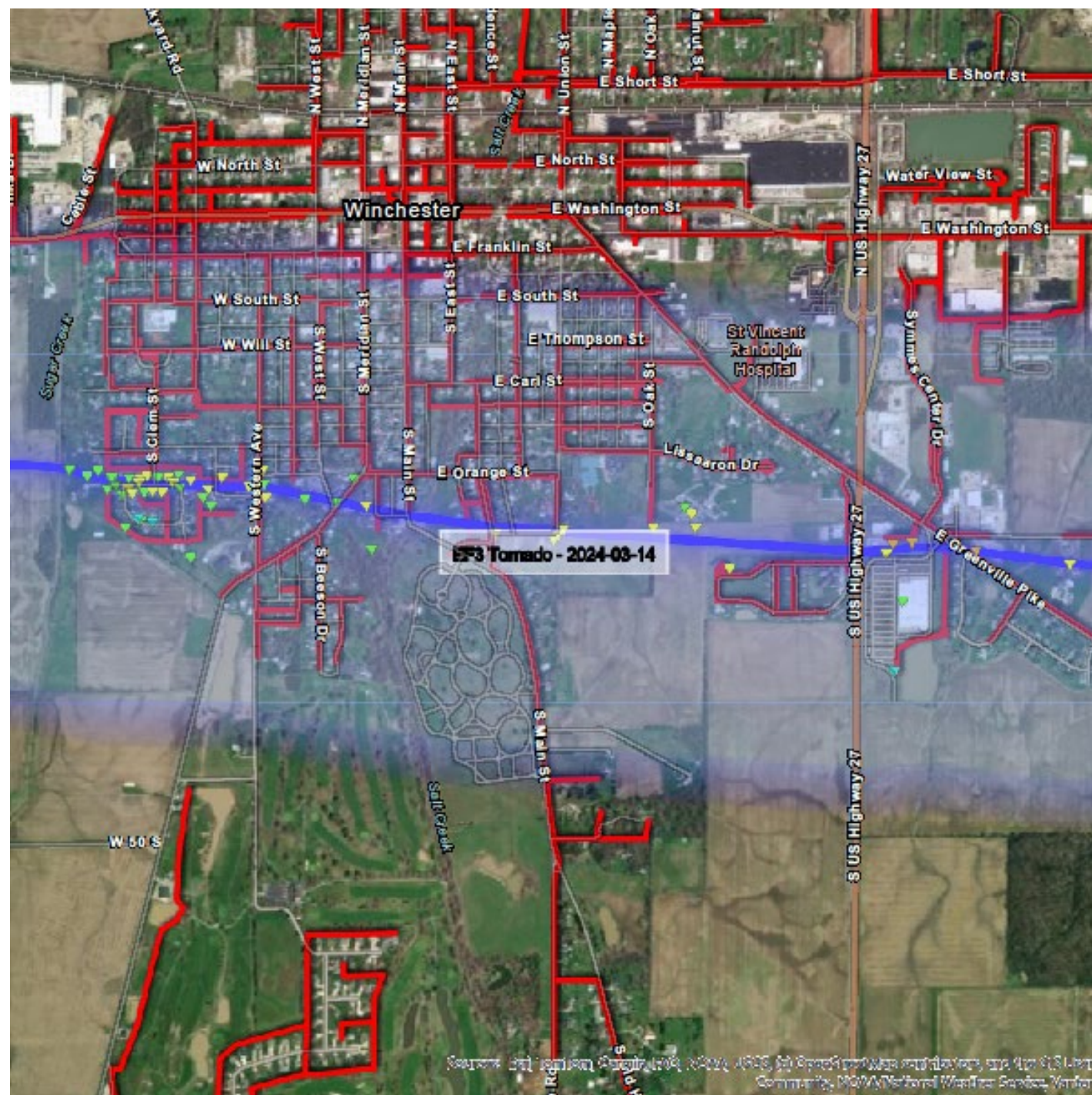
March 14, 2024-Winchester

## Key differences between the tornados

- Sullivan required valves to be shut to isolate a section of town
- Winchester did not require valve closure
- Local attempts to help did not hamper access in Winchester
- EMA was actively engaged in Winchester, not so much in Sullivan
- Winchester mapping was electronic, Sullivan was still on paper map system at the time







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# Lessons Learned

- No matter how prepared you are-you are not fully prepared
- Access-locals with equipment trying to help



# Lessons Learned

- Stay in contact with local EMA
- Be prepared to have someone spend the night in the EMA command center
  - Coordinate with Indiana Task Force One
  - Coordinate leak calls with first responders



# Lessons Learned

## Working in Total Darkness

- Downed power lines and debris
  - Safely working in a hazardous environment.
  - Access may not be available.
- Extent of affected area
  - We don't know what all has been hit.
  - Methodically searching the surrounding areas.
- Emergency responders
  - Marked vehicles and vests to be identified as the gas company may not be enough.



# Lessons Learned

## Command Center

- Can be established anywhere
- Prevent duplication of efforts
  - Establish a methodical process
  - Changes to the process made at the Command Center
- Communication Hub
  - Funnel all information through the Command Center.
  - Rumor Control



# Lessons Learned

## Manpower

### What manpower is available

- Crew members may be affected and not available

- Start contacting resources (internal or contractor). Get a plan

- OVG is able to pull in resources from other districts from unaffected areas. If using contractors make sure your OQ plan allows for mutual- aid.

### What equipment is available

- is your equipment affected and accessible

- Are your tools available

### Adapt for the unknown

### Once you get a scope of the work, stagger the workforce if needed

- Travel times, lodging, and food need to be planned also. Local resources may not be available.



# Lessons Learned

## Be flexible

OVG's Engineering team is trained and OQ qualified to work in the field.

You may not be in "your role" for the entire event.

We moved where we were needed.

- service work

- customer service

- delivery/runner of tools, equipment, and supplies

- food/meal prep and delivery for employees

Being part of the community and helping your neighbors after the "gas work".

Utilize system and surrounding area knowledge from district employees.

Out of district or contractor employees may not know the areas or system, team them up with local employees.



# Lessons Learned

## Locates

### Sullivan tornado

Locates 2 days before event

14 locates at the end of the business day 3/30/23 Thursday

6 locates at the end of the business day 3/31/23 Friday

After event within 72 hours

Day 1

3 standard locates

41 emergency locates

Day 2

5 normal locates

15 emergency locates

Day 3

10 normal locates

18 emergency locates



Normal locate numbers for Sullivan

25 to 30 locates a day due to fiber installs beginning

Less than 10 emergency locates a month

**OVG does not use outside locating contractors**

# Lessons Learned

## Locates

### Winchester tornado

Locates 2 days before event

14 Locates at the end of the business day 3/13/24 Wednesday

7 locates at the end of the business day 3/14/24 Thursday

After event within 48 hours

139 standard locates

110 emergency locates

Normal locate numbers for Winchester

15 to 20 locates a day

Less than 10 emergency locates a month



**OVG does not use outside locating contractors**

# Lessons Learned

## Service Reestablishment- Do they have power?

- No Power-customer is asked to call back when the power has been restored and the situation is safe.
- When we confirmed they had power then the customer was put on a restoration list.
  - Safety checks
  - Piping pressure tests
- Generators



# FLUE PROBLEMS AND CHIMNEY DAMAGE



# GREEN TAG SYSTEM IN OVG OUTAGES

- Make sure we are as efficient as we can be
- Notifies the customer that they have been shut off for an extreme emergency
- Top part of card is zip tied with the meter
- Bottom part of card is returned to the command center
- A couple of things it helps to clarify:
  1. Shows that an OVG employee has been there
  2. Notifies the on-call employee as to who may have shut off the meter set

OVG 155  
2/79

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**DANGER**

**This Meter is Shut Off  
Due to Extreme  
Emergency**

**Do Not Tamper With or  
Turn On This Meter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Employee \_\_\_\_\_

**OHIO VALLEY GAS CORPORATION**

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**METER SHUT OFF** No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date Turned on \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

OVG155 (2/79)

# Lessons Learned

## What technology does OVG rely on?

1

### Cell network / Wi-fi

- Cloud services
- Automated Texting/Notifications
- Communication

2

### ESRI

- ArcGIS
- Field Maps
- Survey123

3

### Alliance

- Billing software
- Addresses/Customers

# Lessons Learned

## What failed in Winchester?

- Cell network sporadic outages
  - Loss of digital maps
  - Loss of damage reporting functions
  - Loss of communication
  - Loss of all cloud services (navigation, customer lookup)
- Power outage
  - Main office generator failed
  - Primary network offline
  - Loss of local files as well

# Lessons Learned

## Learn to Pivot

- Rely on historical processes/information, if possible
  - Paper maps
  - Paper service records
- Develop a system
  - Nominate roles and responsibilities
  - Keep things simple, but effective
  - Use your resources
- Improvise

# Lessons Learned

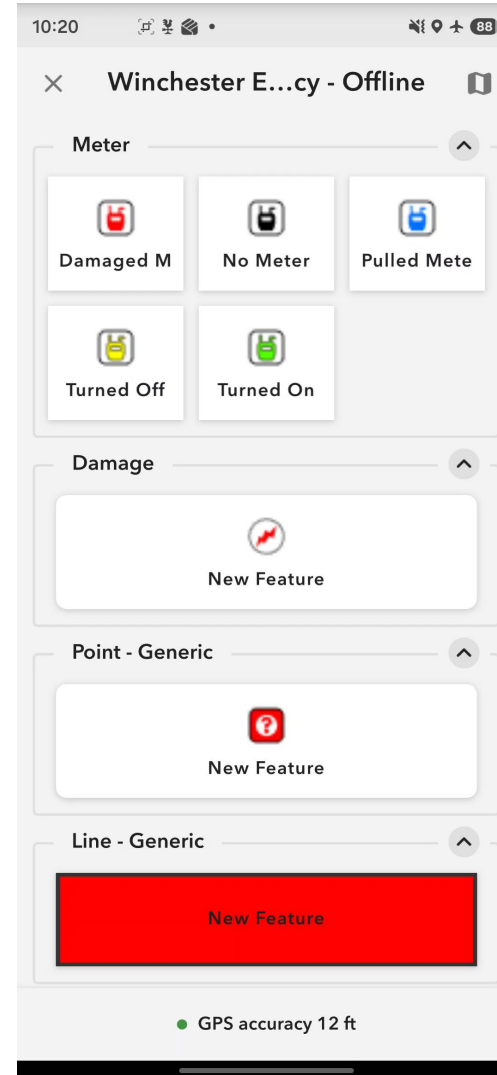
## What have we changed?

- Local Network
  - Backups of local data in other districts/locations
  - IT reinforced internal network
- Cloud services
  - Offline mapping
  - Delayed submission apps
- Continuing training/Scenarios

# ESRI

## Quick Capture

- Included with ESRI subscriptions
- Simple to use and configure
- Works offline
- Dedicated Emergency Map



## Data Backup & Storage

- Field Maps
- Offline Map Areas & Sync
- Data backups stored in multiple locations
- Command Center Use
- Talk to your other departments about useful information





**WINCHESTER IN.**

QUESTIONS

