

In YOUR Backyard: @NashSevereWx

WARNING: Failure to read below may result in lack of information that will keep you and the ones you love safe during severe weather.

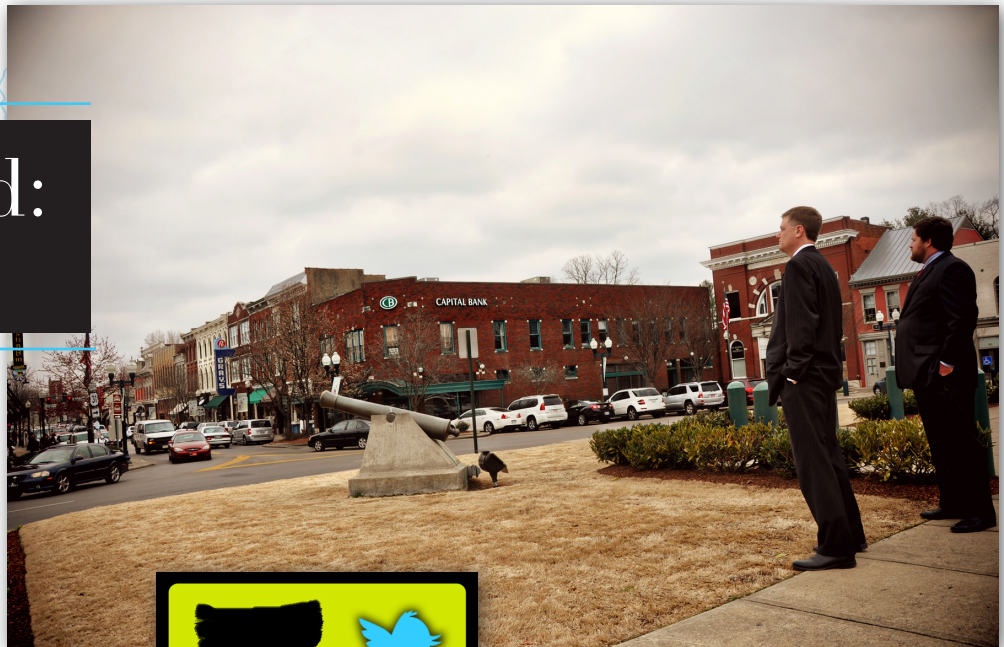
You've heard of and probably seen "the calm before the storm." Well, for the past two years, a Williamson County man has made it his mission to provide a calm "during" the storm. His name is David Drobny and he has been using his Twitter account @NashSevereWx to inform Williamson and Davidson County in real-time about the threatening weather that we so often have. Since we are in the midst of tornado season, it is time for the rest of Williamson and Davidson County, not already following @NashSevereWx,

to get on board. Why? Because you CANNOT get this kind of weather information from anywhere else. Our four local news stations have to cover all of middle Tennessee. They're very good at what they do, but when multiple storms come and they have to divide their attention, @NashSevereWX focuses on only the two counties.

Drobny is a lawyer by profession so informing our community about the weather is something he does voluntarily, as a result of his passion for it. He is also married with two children. When asked why he does this, he said, "A few years ago, what I call 'TV quality' radar software and data became available to the public. I've always loved following storms, so I bought the software and paid for the data. When severe weather would approach, or a warning was issued, I didn't have to wait for TV to cover the storm close to me. I had all the data I needed on my computer. Soon after, friends of ours would call or text asking where the storm was, should they take cover, was it safe to go here or there, etc.? It was difficult to answer six text messages and phone calls at once, most of which asked about the same storm. So I told our friends and family I would put all the information they needed to know on Twitter. That's how I got started."

The information comes from the National Weather Service (NWS) and is provided not only via Twitter, but also, a website built for access on a smartphone and computer, making it mobile and immune to cable/satellite outages. It also allows the user to communicate with @NashSevereWx. NWS in Nashville recognizes them as media and has granted them access to NWS Chat, giving them the same access to weather information as TV and emergency management. Through this relationship @NashSevereWx worked with the NWS and invented a program called #tSpotter, which is a Twitter hashtag. If anyone sees severe or winter weather, simply include "#tSpotter" in your tweet with your report (and a photo/location if you want), and the NWS will see it. It's delivering real-time severe and winter weather reports the NWS never had before, improving the warning and forecast process.

In February of 2011, @NashSevereWx had 100 followers on Twitter. Today they are nearly to 14,000. Along the way they have received press coverage from the Associated Press, The Tennessean and National Public Radio. They've been designated a local "best Twitter account" on lists like the Nashville Scene's. Through this growth, Drobny saw the need to find



help. He saw that Bellevue resident, Will Minkoff, was running a similar Twitter feed, so Drobny contacted him. Minkoff was quickly on board

An avid follower of @NashSevereWx is Williamson County resident and journalist,

Mindy Tate. Tate has been a "weather nut" since the age of 12, when she was hiding from the tornadoes in her garage. Tate says, "The guys at NashSevereWx feed my habit for information on the weather situation with their Twitter feed. As the social media outreach for the National Weather Service, they are collecting and disseminating real-time data that is valuable and impacting lives in a positive way. I probably retweet them more than any other entity or person I regularly follow, and I think the people who follow me appreciate that. I'm just surprised they ONLY have 14,000 followers!"

Another of their many followers is Nashville blogger Laura McClellan. In a recent blog entitled "Twitter + Tornado Warnings = BFFs", McClellan writes about her experience during tornadoes and the community that has been formed through Twitter, during severe weather. Referring to Drobny and what he's doing through @NashSevereWx, she says, "We can all sleep soundly knowing NashSevere is out there, watching over us. He's basically Batman."

@NashSevereWx has no plans of expanding their coverage area. They want to continue on focusing only on Williamson and Davidson County and find more ways to get the information to as many of the residents as possible. Right now, they are looking into building apps. Drobny says, "During severe weather, information is everything. You can protect yourself from the overwhelming majority of storms if you know what's coming, have a plan and heed warnings. We love being a part of the larger weather community providing this information to our family, friends and neighbors."

Follow @NashSevereWx on Twitter or go to:
www.nashvillesevereweather.com.