Endre Samu, public affairs officer for the Kentucky State Police in Morehead, said three people died in West Liberty and at least 75 were injured. With the hospital damaged in the storm, some patients were being transferred to area hospitals, he said.

A string of violent storms demolished small towns in Indiana and cut off rural communities in Kentucky as an early season tornado outbreak killed more than 30 people, and the death toll rose as daylight broke on Saturday's search for survivors.

Massive thunderstorms, predicted by forecasters for days, threw off dozens of tornadoes as they raced Friday from the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes. Twisters crushed blocks of homes, knocked out cellphones and landlines, ripped power lines from broken poles and tossed cars, school buses and tractor-trailers onto roads made impassable by debris.

Weather that put millions of people at risk killed at least 34 in four states - Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio - but both the scale of the devastation and the breadth of the storms made an immediate assessment of the havoc's full extent all but impossible.

In Kentucky, the National Guard and state police headed out to search wreckage for an unknown number of missing. In Indiana, authorities searched dark county roads connecting rural communities that officials said "are completely gone."

In Henryville, the birthplace of Kentucky Fried Chicken founder Colonel Harland Sanders, volunteers pushed shopping carts full of water and food down littered streets, handing supplies to anyone in need. Hundreds of firefighters and police zipped around town, where few recognizable structures remained; all of Henryville's schools were destroyed. Wind had blown out the windows of the Henryville Community Presbyterian Church and gutted the building.

"It's all gone," said Andy Bell, who was guarding a friend's demolished service garage, not far from where a school bus stuck out from the side of a restaurant and a parking lot where a small classroom chair jutted from a car window.

"It was beautiful," he said, looking around at the town of about 2,000 north of Louisville, Ky. "And now it's just gone. I mean, gone."

Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels spoke to reporters Saturday outside what was left of Henryville High School. He marveled that all the students were safe and credited preparation and people heeding warnings to take shelter for saving lives.

"Yet all things that mere mortals can do aren't enough sometimes," he said.

Daniels said he wanted residents to know "we love you, and we're with you. We're going to do everything we can to get you back on your feet in business, in your homes, and bear with us."

A baby was found in a field in Salem, about 10 miles north of New Pekin, where her family lives, said Melissa Richardson, spokeswoman at St. Vincent Salem Hospital, where the little girl was initially taken.

The child was in critical condition Saturday at a hospital in Louisville, Ky., and authorities were still trying to figure out how she ended up alone in the field, Richardson said. She said she couldn't identify the child or her family.

Friday's tornado outbreak came two days after an earlier round of storms killed 13 people in the Midwest and South, and forecasters at the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center had said the day would be one of a handful this year that warranted its highest risk level. By 10 p.m., the weather service had issued 269 tornado warnings. Only 189 warnings were issued in all of February.

"We knew this was coming. We were watching the weather like everyone else," said Clark County, Ind., Sheriff Danny Rodden. "This was the worst case scenario. There's no way you can prepare for something like this."

Fourteen people were reported killed in Indiana, including four in Chelsea, where a man, woman and their 4-year-old great-grandchild died in one house. Tony Williams, owner of the Chelsea General Store, said the child and mother were huddled in a basement when the storm hit and sucked the 4-year-old out her hands. The mother survived, but her 70-year-old grandparents were upstairs; both died.

"They found them in the field, back behind the house," Williams said.

Two people died further north in Holton, where it appeared a tornado cut a diagonal swath down the town's tiny main drag, demolishing a cinderblock gas station but leaving a tiny white church intact down the road.

"We are going to continue to hit every county road that we know of that there are homes on and search those homes," said Indiana State Police Sgt. Jerry Goodin. "We have whole

communities and whole neighborhoods that are completely gone. We've had a terrible, terrible tragedy here."

Sixteen people were reported dead in Kentucky, where National Guard troops, Kentucky State Police troopers and rescue workers were still searching counties east and south of Lexington.

In West Liberty, Ky., Stephen Burton heard the twister coming and pulled his 23-year-old daughter to safety, just before the tornado destroyed the second story of the family's home.

"I held onto her and made it to the center of the house, next to a closet," Burton said. "I just held onto her, and I felt like I was getting sand-blasted on my back."

Endre Samu, public affairs officer for the Kentucky State Police in Morehead, said three people died in West Liberty and at least 75 were injured. With the hospital damaged in the storm, some patients were being transferred to area hospitals, he said.

"All of the downtown area was just devastated," Samu said.

Tornadoes were reported in at least six Ohio cities and towns, including the village of Moscow, where a council member found dead in her home was one of at least three people killed in the state. Several dozen homes were damaged, some stripped down to their foundations, and the Clermont County commissioners called a state of emergency for the first time in 15 years.

One person was reported dead Saturday in Alabama. Emergency Management Agency spokeswoman Yasamie August said an apparent tornado that hit Jackson Gap injured two others as well. She didn't have more details.