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Silver Bluff firefighters returned to this scene after Friday's storm destroyed their entire facility.

Keowee firefighters lend a helping hand to storm victims

By ANDREW MOORE
andrew@dailyjm.com

SENECA — Keowee firefighters toiled into the early morning Sunday, fighting a blaze that completely destroyed a trailer, but for four of them, their work for the day was only beginning.

"I'm from a town called Beech Island, S.C." Keowee Fire Chief Richie Caudill said. "I was the chief there for seven years."

As it turns out, Caudill's former home — a small unincorporated community in Aiken County just southeast of North Augusta, had been rocked by a tornado during Friday night's thunderstorms. Among the devastation in Beech Island that included damaged homes and one person killed, was the Silver Bluff fire department, which lost fire trucks and its entire facility.

Caudill, Scott Walker, Dave Mansfield and David Stewart of the Keowee Fire Department took the three-hour trek from Seneca to Beech Island to help in any way they could, such as assisting people out of the wreckage of their homes.

"These guys spent all morning Saturday fighting a fire in Shiloh. They spent Sunday morning fighting a trailer fire in Ebenezer and spent all day yesterday on their own time helping people dig out from a tornado," Caudill said. "They stepped up. These guys really give so much."