

# *Persons Needed in Tornado Cleanup*

## **Suffield**

SUFFIELD — Volunteers are needed Saturday to aid in a massive cleanup of tobacco farms still littered with debris from the Oct. 3 tornado that whipped through the Connecticut River Valley.

State Rep. Astrid Hanzalek, R-Suffield, who is organizing the effort, said Wednesday about 300 acres of tobacco fields still need to be cleared. Unless the rubble is removed, the farmers won't be able to plant a new crop next spring, she said.

Volunteers should meet at 9 a.m. in front of the Leahey Bros. tobacco farm on Tainter Street. All participants should wear heavy gloves and

thick-soled shoes, she said.

Mrs. Hanzalek said the idea for a massive cleanup was the result of a meeting she had earlier this week with farmers who sustained major losses from the tornado.

The farmers told her their primary concern was to have the rubble removed from their fields before snow sets in for their spring planting. Although cleanup efforts were organized immediately after the tornado occurred, a lot more work remains to be done, she said.

It takes five persons an entire day to clear just one acre, she said.

About 12 farmers were hit hard by the tornado. Local officials place the damage estimate to agriculture here at \$3.5 million, most of it related to the town's tobacco industry.

"These farmers still have a lot of

problems and thought that most people had forgotten about them," she said.

A number of residents already are planning to participate, including students from the Suffield Regional Vocational Agricultural School and the local Jaycees.

The Emergency Aid Association is planning to supply food and refreshments to those who participate, she said.

The state Department of Environmental Protection is supplying a machine to aid in picking up the rubble, while the U.S. Army National Guard at Bradley International Airport has promised to supply a bulldozer.

"We're hoping to get an army of pickers," she said.