

Storm ... Continued from A-1

“All hands were on deck, we even had to pull from the Cascade station to help with the load,” said Gary Leaming, an ODOT manager of the highway division. The department is not really equipped to handle low level snow fall (valley floors), they are staffed more for mountain elevations. Because the snow was wet and the temperatures were colder than normal, the de-icers were not very effective on the roads, regardless of what crews continued to do.

Some of Leaming’s tips for travelers during the winter months, regardless of where your destination may be, are to always carry chains and know how to put them on and have a kit that includes: gloves, snacks/water, a shovel and cat litter to help create traction if your vehicle gets stuck in snow or ice. Also check road conditions before you head out. Tripcheck (www.tripcheck.com) is a good site to check along with going to Oregon.gov/odot and check out the Oregon storybook. Both sites will have current road conditions as well as other useful travel information. Leaming also would like to thank travelers for giving the plow drivers and other ODOT drivers plenty of space in front of and behind the trucks.

With the road conditions continuing to be hazardous over the weekend many festive activities were canceled. Due to local schools being closed, Dell’Arte Company had to cancel their rendition of “Babes in Toyland” which was scheduled for December 6 at Lorna Byrne Middle School.

Schools and holiday activities were not the only groups affected by Jack Frost paying an early visit to the Illinois Valley. The post office also had to deal with the icy road conditions.

“The storm did slow us down a bit; the drivers had to go slower due to the ice.

Because of the icy roads the delivery trucks had to go slower, which meant many mail delivery drivers had to deal with driving in the dark, some of the mail was late, making it challenging,” said Cave Junction Postmaster Arlyse Deloyola.

Taylor’s Country Store also saw an impact in the form of less business due to the unexpected weather. Normally on Friday nights Taylor’s hosts dinner and music, closing later at 8:30 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. Due to the dangerous driving conditions the band slated to play

had to cancel and Taylor’s closed early because of lack of business that night.

About the only establishment that did not see a lack in business was the Illinois Valley Fire Department. Because of the icy road conditions the fire department saw an increase in calls, mostly vehicle accidents.

“Our response time was a little slower due to the road conditions,” said Fire Chief Hoke.

The weather has made the jobs of the volunteer firefighters more difficult, what with the icy roads and freezing temperatures, the crews still have to drive carefully and stay warm while on calls. Fire Chief Hoke asks that the public be careful during the winter months, not only while driving but with heating systems as well. If a house contains a wood stove make sure that preventive maintenance is kept up to prevent unwanted chimney fires. Also maintenance of other types of heating systems is critical. If not cared for properly, they too can cause unwanted house fires.

With Sunday weather reports stating icy conditions early Monday morning, Adams had a hard decision to make; allow school to continue or cancel? Many factors help in the decisions when it comes to having to close schools for even a day. Where is the staff traveling from, will the students be safe while outside waiting for the bus, will the busses and parents driving their kids to school be able to handle the roads in a safe manner? Since the storm, staff members from the Three Rivers School District have gone out and inspected many roads checking for road conditions and reporting back to the office.

“When it comes to the students, we take great care in our decisions. We must take all students and staff into consideration when making any decision that affects our schools,” said Adams.

The Board of County Commissioners also closed their offices for Monday, Dec. 9, although all Josephine County Circuit Courts remained open. Business was scheduled to continue as usual on Tuesday, Dec. 10.

With the weather forecast calling for slightly warmer weather through-out the rest of the week, the road conditions will improve and life will return to normal but still considerably cooler for this time of year.



(Photo by Dale Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept)

One of many vehicles that landed in local ditches Friday Dec. 6 in Sis’s Gap.

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