

State deals with snow removal

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

With the coming of the snow, snowplows and snow blowers will once again have to deal not only with stranded or abandoned cars, but also with vehicles left along the highway by motorists using the ski resort areas of Mt. Hood.

Harry Woodward, district maintenance supervisor for the Oregon State Highway Division, said in a recent telephone interview that people can legally park alongside the highway.

This applies unless there are signs indicating otherwise.

"You can legally park on the highway as long as you are in back of the fog line (the line that runs on the right side of the roadway)," said Woodward. "That is, unless it's specifically signed 'no parking.'"

Woodward said that because of this state plows and snow blowers will not deliberately push the snowbanks back far enough to allow parking within the fog line.

Generally, according to Woodward, this is done in the higher elevations in the ski resort areas.

"In the wintertime up around the Government Camp area, we don't generally push the snow back very far, deliberately," said Woodward, "because it'll encourage parking."

"By leaving these snowbanks close to the roads we can continue to plow without having to maneuver around a lot of parked cars."

Woodward said that even if the plows did push the snowbanks back, in a lot of areas there just wouldn't be much shoulder to park on. When a few feet of snow are piled onto the shoulders, people find other places to park.

Designated snow park areas, which are kept plowed, provide a balance in relation to the parking spaces taken up by the snowbanks alongside of the highway, said Woodward.

Woodward said that although the state keeps these areas plowed they too are not without problems.

One of the largest snow park areas on Mt. Hood, and probably the one with the most problems, said Woodward, is Government Camp. This snow park area has a maximum capacity, which often doesn't seem to be enough on "a prime ski weekend."

"It's a really different set of problems at Government Camp," said Woodward. "The more parking you have in Government Camp, the more demand for parking you seem to have. People never seem to have enough."

To keep this snow park area open, Woodward said that they are plowed on an average of two to three times a week during the snow season. He said it also depends on snow conditions.

However, because some people make their homes in the area, the town's parking problems are compounded.

Each side of the road is plowed on alternate days, and as a result residents are forced to relocate their vehicles to the "safe" side, the side that won't be plowed that day.

As indicated by signs, the north and south sides are alternately plowed each time, to maximize, as much as possible, the available space, said Woodward.

Woodward said that if the vehicles are not moved by the time specified by the signs they are ticketed by the Oregon State Police and towed at the owner's expense.

For those cars parked alongside of the highway, or in areas that are scheduled to be plowed, but are buried under heavy snows, the state plows will attempt to go around them.

Sometimes, however, they are buried even more as a direct result of the plow's efforts.

Tabs are kept on these vehicles by tying ribbons to the radio antennas.

But occasionally, according to Woodward, cars are damaged.

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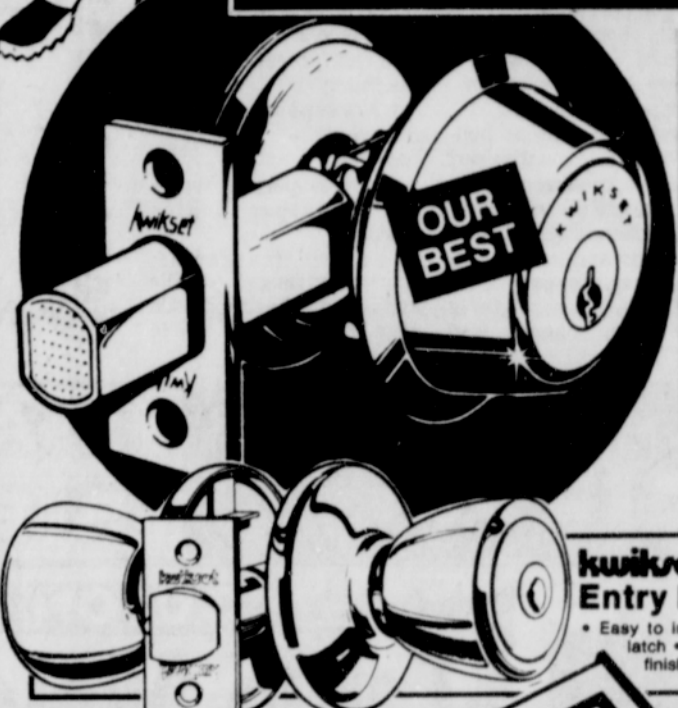


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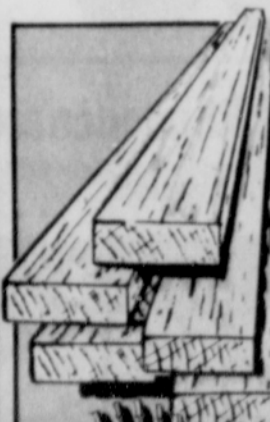
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