

# STORM: Debris drop site will stay open thru Sunday



Top photo courtesy of Lewis Media Group

TOP: An aerial photo of the damage at Claggett Creek Park where several large, mature maple trees will now need to be taken down. ABOVE: Bruno Lopez and Jony Granado unload branches south of Keizer Little League Park.

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in his wallet to cover the cost of filling a large propane tank.

The Jaymar resident turned and handed him \$20 and one of his business cards.

"He said, 'I know you're good for it.' After I filled the propane tank, went to the bank and dropped by his house. I also got to see what he and his neighbors had done," Lawyer said.

Keizer Public Works employees began receiving the first calls regarding downed trees and wires on Friday evening. A two-man crew spent the entire night putting out caution signs as trees cracked under the weight of the ice.

By Saturday evening, Lawyer was able to send everyone home to rest, but they were back out Sunday morning.

A significant portion of the power had returned by Sunday night, but some residents appeared in for a long haul. Portland General Electric stopped estimating repair times by Monday morning.

In addition to helping keep streets clear, about 15 public works employees kept a thumb on the pulse of numerous systems.

"We've been closely monitoring the water systems, putting pump stations on back-up engines, deploying generators to traffic signals and keeping tabs on what was happening in our parks," Lawyer said. "The staff handled this very well, they were confident in what they were doing and I couldn't be more proud of them."

Numerous Keizer parks were still closed Wednesday, Feb. 16.

"Claggett Creek Park just breaks my heart. There are some large, mature maple trees that will have to be taken down there," Lawyer said.

As residents celebrated President's Day Monday, Feb. 15, clean-up began in earnest. A drop-off site for branches and downed trees was established at the south parking lot of Keizer Little League Park. Within a few hours, the pile of debris was 25 yards long, 10 yards wide and up to nine feet high. Debris collection will continue at the site at least through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Future hours

will be based on need.

"It may continue to be open daily or only one weekend, but we are working with local haulers to muddle through the operation," Lawyer said.

Ultimately, the debris will be ground up and repurposed into organic material. Marion County is also permitting all local municipalities to take debris to Brown's Island in Salem for no-charge disposal.

Lawyer said a grinder may be dispatched to the KLL parking lot to help with the removal effort.

Local haulers are encouraging neighbors to split the cost of a large disposal bin to clean up their neck of the woods. Haulers are prepared to work with residents to keep the cost reasonable, said City Manager Chris Eppley at a meeting of the Keizer City Council Tuesday, Feb. 16.

Lawyer said the city will take responsibility for any debris in the rights-of-way on private property. Wood cut in Keizer parks will be left on-site and free to the public.

He cautioned residents to keep their eyes peeled when walking and driving.

"Call them hangers or widowmakers or whatever you want, but there are unstable branches still in the trees. Stay out from under them," Lawyer said.

The Keizer Police Department was busy responding to the storm as well. In the 12-hour period between 7 p.m. Feb. 12 and 7 a.m. Feb. 13, Keizer officers responded to 80 storm-related calls. Another 50 calls for service came in before midnight Saturday.

"Almost all of these calls were for down trees and branches affecting Keizer roadways," said Lt. Bob Trump, spokesperson for the department.

At one point, Sgt. Rodney Bamford had to call in public works employees to assist with tree removal on Wheatland Road North.

"Over the next several hours, public works employees and responding officers cleared roadways and placed barricades at many locations to ensure safe travels," Trump said.

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