

Storm clean up costs

BY CAITLYN MAY
cmay@cgsentinel.com

Over 30 tons of sand was used to clean-up the streets of Cottage Grove after back-to-back winter storms closed much of the city and caused delays for travelers.

"Ice storms are difficult because there's not a lot you can do," said public works director Jan Wellman.

Residents who could, were urged to stay home but those who had to venture out into the weather generated complaints over the condition of the roads. However, according to Wellman, traditional clearing methods are often ineffective when dealing with ice and the best course of action is for those who are able to avoid traveling, to do so.

"Snow can be plowed and pushed out of the way...the snow blade just skitters over the top of the ice and if you can lift the ice with the blade, sections of asphalt usually come along with it," Wellman said.

The cost of the clean-up efforts included 38 tons of sand at \$12 a ton and approximately eight hours of overtime for

two employees at \$50 an hour. The cost of the equipment and work-week manpower were not included as those expenses are part of the city's standing budget.

While some residents raised concerns over the conditions of the streets and an inability to travel from their homes, Wellman said it's not within the city's procedure to clear residential streets.

"If we get a call that there's a particular street that's bad or if it's a severe storm we might clear those streets but generally we do the collector streets and the business district," Wellman said.

Oregon State Police urged motorists to stay off the roads, warning of dangerous conditions and implementing chain requirements for much of Interstate 5. It's a request Wellman agreed with noting residents who can, should can stay home and off the roads during inclement weather.

"The storm was nowhere near as bad as the ice storm from a couple of years ago and Cottage Grove fared much better than our neighbors to the north and south of us."



Cottage Grove Police were on the scene to aid Oregon State Police on Jan. 12 after a hit-and-run accident led back to Cottage Grove. Social media noticed police presence on Lincoln St. between 6th and 8th streets on Thursday afternoon. Reports of an individual being barricaded inside their home drew speculation with neighbors gathering outside. However, authorities on the scene said the cause of the commotion was a previous hit-and-run accident on the freeway with an individual returning from that scene to Cottage Grove and driving a truck into the garage of their residence. That same individual then fled inside the house and refused to comply with police orders to exit the residence.

The individuals' actions cause law enforcement to have concern for their mental and emotion health, subsequently blocking the street to the public. The issue was resolved shortly before 4 p.m. with authorities on scene noting that an ambulance would be arriving to "check-out" the individual and insure their safety while the street was re-opened to the public.

The individual's identity has not been released.

State warns of flu season

Cottage Grove sees a spike in cases

The flu is making its way down the I-5 and according to PeaceHealth, cases have increased in Cottage Grove.

"We've definitely been seeing more people coming in with the flu," said Becky Fisher of the Cottage Grove Community Health Center. According to Fisher, providers and staff from local clinics have been going home sick and walk-in clinics are, at times, at capacity.

Oregon has released specific tips on fighting the flu and offered the following information:

People should call 911 if someone they know with the flu has severe shortness of breath or is difficult to wake. For those 65 and older, pregnant women, children, and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems who get fever with cough or sore throat, talk to a health care provider.

Flu cases in Oregon have spiked in recent weeks. Laboratories in the state reported 1,641 specimens that were positive for influenza during the week of Dec. 25-31. That's up from 609 positive flu specimens the previous week. Most of the cases have been influenza A, this season's predominant flu type, with one strain, H3N2, hitting the elderly population particularly hard.

Hospitalizations also have been on the rise. There were 143 hospitalizations during Dec. 25-31, which was nearly double the previ-

ous week's total. The week before that saw just 33 hospitalizations.

There have been no pediatric deaths attributed to the flu this season, officials say. The Public Health Division does not track adult flu deaths.

Officials offer these tips:

-- Get the flu vaccine. It's the most effective way to prevent the flu. The fewer people who get the virus, the fewer who will need care.

-- "Know when to go." Understand flu symptoms and their severity, and when it's OK to just call your doctor or stay home.

Even though most people only have mild illness, some people with severe illness do need emergency care. Adults having a hard time breathing or shortness of breath; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, purple or blue discoloration of the lips, or seizures should be seen promptly. This is also true for people with flu who get better, then have a fever and cough that return.

Children should be seen urgently if they have fast or troubled breathing, bluish skin color, are not waking up or interacting, become so irritable that they do not want to be held, or have fever with a rash. They also should be seen if symptoms of the flu get better but then come back with a fever and cough. Infants should get

medical help right away if they are unable to eat, have a hard time breathing, do not have tears when they cry, or have many fewer wet diapers than normal.

-- Stay home and limit contact with others if you are sick, including staying home from work or school when you are sick.

-- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue out when you are done.

-- Wash hands with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.

-- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

-- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may have flu germs on them.

-- Avoid getting coughed and sneezed on.

Just in time for National Hobby Month



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Find a hobby that works for you

Hobbies can serve many functions. Some men and women turn their hobbies into careers, while others rely on their hobbies to provide a relaxing respite from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Inspiring hobbies can make life more rewarding. While many people experience some trial and error as they seek something to fill their downtime, the following are a few tips to finding a hobby that will enrich your life and maybe even the lives of others.

• Consider your interests. Much like you considered your interests when choosing a career path, you can benefit from doing the same when the time comes to find a hobby. If your work remains your passion, look for ways to share that passion with others. Perhaps you can teach a class at your community's learning annex or volunteer to work with high school kids who might have expressed an interest in your line of work. If you want to leave the office behind in your downtime, consider your other interests. Avid readers

may want to start a local book club, while film buffs may enjoy starting a local film appreciation group. The more passionate you are about a topic or activity, the more likely you can turn it into a successful and rewarding hobby.

• Consider your needs. Another way to find a successful hobby is to consider why you want one in the first place. If your workdays tend to be hectic and you want a quiet escape, then a peaceful hobby such as painting might do the trick. If you're looking for a hobby that can add some spice to your social life and help you meet new people, look for something that encourages teamwork or interaction with other people your age.

• Consider your availability. Another thing to consider when choosing a hobby is how much time you will have to pursue it. If your schedule is especially hectic or unpredictable, avoid hobbies that require a big time commitment, as such activities may prove too difficult to commit to. In such situations, a hobby that allows

you to embrace it on your own time will likely prove more enjoyable than one where you must adhere to a schedule that you simply can't honor. If you have a substantial amount of free time, then something that requires more involvement on your part might be right up your alley, whereas hobbies that don't require much regular participation likely won't provide the respite or fulfillment you're looking for.

• Consider those closest to you. Many people find that the best hobbies are the ones that allow them to spend more time with their loved ones, whether those loved ones are their own children, their parents or their close friends. Parents may want to find an activity that allows them to bond with their children, while young working professionals may want to find an activity that provides them with opportunities to spend time with their equally busy friends.

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