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Use caution in winter driving

Time to trim the tree and deck the hall, time to make the egg nog and rush to the mall. "Preparing for the holidays requires a lot of rushing around, however the key to safe winter driving is to slow down and take your time," says Jill Marie Perucca, staff writer for Western Insurance Information Service (WIIS).

"There were over 45 traffic fatalities last year between Thanksgiving and New Years Day in Oregon alone," Perucca noted. Insurance companies through WIIS suggest the following ways to reduce your chances of becoming a holiday traffic accident victim during this time of year:

- * Drive slowly if roads are icy, be careful when braking or accelerating. If your car starts to skid, remember to steer in the direction of the skid.

- * Turn on your headlights earlier than you normally would, even if this does not help you see, it will help you be seen by other motorists.

- * Keep a safe distance from the car in front of you, it takes 10 times longer to stop in wet, freezing conditions than on dry pavement.

- * Keep on the look out for icy patches on roads, especially in shaded areas, beneath overpasses and under bridges.

- * Slow down before starting down a hill. Shift into a low gear and gently pump the brakes to keep a controlled descent.

- * Drive defensively, always wear your seat belt, it's the law and it saves lives.

- * Don't drink and drive - ever. As this holiday season gets underway, Perucca noted that police across Oregon will be stepping up campaigns to catch drunk drivers, in fact many law enforcement agencies now equip their patrol cars with video cameras to film suspected drunk drivers. More importantly alcohol-related accidents claim more than 20,000 lives a year, accounting for nearly half of all driving accidents, accidents which could have easily been avoided if people wouldn't drink and drive.

In addition, emergency situations can often be avoided if your car is properly prepared for winter weather and road conditions. WIIS offers this list of safety checks and adjustments to be made in preparation for winter driving:

- * Tires, When mounting snow tires, check to assure proper tread and air pressure; the more surface tread on the road, the better the traction.

- * Brakes, check brakes for pulls in either direction; even a slight pull can cause a dangerous spin on icy roads.

- * Cooling/Heating, Check anti-freeze and replace if necessary. Check your hoses, belts, and radiators for leaks, cracks or bulges.

- * Electrical System, check your battery to be sure it is fully charged, a dead battery is one of the most frequent causes of winter roadside stalls.

- * Fluids, change your oil and your oil filter, you may wish to use a multi-grade oil such as 10W-40 for easier starts and better fuel economy.

- * Lights and Wipers, check your headlights for proper alignment and make sure all lights are in proper working order. Wipers that work properly are extremely important for safety in the Oregon rain.

"This information is also available to groups through the volunteer WIIS Speakers' Bureau," Perucca says, adding that interested parties should contact the WIIS regional office at 11855 SW Ridgecrest Dr., Suite 107, Beaverton, OR 97005; (503) 643-6355. WIIS is a non-profit, nonlobbying, consumer education and community service organization serving consumers and insurers in 10 western states. WIIS is funded by property/casualty insurance companies and is affiliated nationally with the Insurance Information Institute (III).

St. Patrick's Senior Center Bulletin Board



Wednesday, December 4, 103 people attended the senior dinner with three dinners taken out. Members from the First Christian Church served. Rose Marie Buschke won the meal ticket, Sue Vinson the door prize and Merri Reamer the guest prize.

Ed Dick and Pat Wright were elected to the Senior Center Board at the dinner. The meal site committee met after dinner.

Host and hostesses for December dinners will be R.G. Watkins and Irene Schroeder.

The birthday and Christmas dinner menu Dec. 18 will be baked ham with raisin sauce, potatoes, special salad, raw vegetables tray, bread, cake and ice cream. Members from the Catholic Church will serve.

Merri Reamer met with the senior center office volunteers for receptionist training on Thursday, Dec. 5. She brought each one a special gift and encourages people to come by the office and learn how you can give a very special gift that is easy to make and inexpensive.

The singles' party for widows and widowers of the area is scheduled for Dec. 26 from 7-9 p.m. at the Senior Center. Merri Reamer and Irene Schroeder will be in charge.

State Senator Wayne Fawbush was at the Senior Center Sat. Dec. 18. Eighteen people were present to visit with him.

Saturday morning a motor coach provided by SCRAM picked up 40 people from the Heppner-Ione-Lexington area for a trip to Portland to attend the Ice Capades, the Festival of Trees and a Christmas bazaar and visit Lloyd Center. Floss Watkins was the tour guide for a most enjoyable trip.

The Area Agency on Aging meeting will be held December 13, 10 a.m. at the Senior Center. All seniors are welcome. Dinner will be served at noon. Cost is \$2.

Other dates to remember: Mondays quilting 1-4 p.m.; knitting 7 p.m.; Tues. and Thurs. exercise 10-10:30 a.m.

The large tree in the center sitting room was brought in by Ralph Walker. It was trimmed by tenants of the apartments.

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