

Press Releases

01-12-11 This Week In Orange County By Edward A. Diana

For many people a snow storm is a chance to cozy up with a good book, enjoy time with the kids home from school, or get in some outdoor recreation. For others, especially those who work in 24-hour operations or have responsibility for public safety, a snow day usually means hard work and long hours. The Highway and Public Works Departments throughout Orange County were busy again this week preparing for, and cleaning up after, another snow storm that hit our region. And, the staff of the Orange County Emergency Operations Center kept close tabs on the storm so that all concerned would be prepared. Thankfully for us, the storm veered east of original predictions and Orange County was spared the brunt of it.

Cleaning the snow and ice from our Orange County roadways so that life can get back to normal as quickly as possible for residents is a big job. Orange County Department of Public Works Commissioner Chuck Lee offers a few suggestions to increase safety on the roads for both residents and plow operators.

- Limit outings to ones that are necessary. Non-essential travel should be scheduled once the weather is better. Less traffic on the road makes it safer for everyone.
- Decrease driving speeds, keep a safe following distance, allow for extra travel time, and be cautious of roadways with snow drifts, ice, or standing water.
- Only use 911 for emergencies.
- White out conditions may impact traffic signal sensing equipment so be cautious when approaching intersections.
- When possible, during a storm event remove all parked vehicles from roadways. This allows for safer streets and for plowing operations to be more effective.
- Do not abandon vehicles in the road.
- When driving, always keep a safe distance away from operating plows.
- If walking in the road, be alert for snow plows. Keep a safe distance if you see one approaching.
- Obstacles such as garbage cans, basketball hoops, and skate ramps should also be cleared from roadways.
- Children at play should keep a safe distance away from streets and should not sleigh ride toward the road.
- Get vehicles ready for winter driving conditions in advance. This includes changing wiper blades, filling fluids, checking tires, purchasing chains or cables, and making sure the vehicle is operating properly to avoid breakdowns.

I've said it before in this column, and it's a message that bears repeating – if you've got sick or elderly neighbors, please take a few minutes to check in on them. They'll appreciate the visit from a friendly face and you can make sure they're doing okay.

The season's snow has been a boon for outdoor recreation. For a great family outing, check out snow tubing at Orange County's Thomas Bull Memorial Park. The Park is open for snow tubing on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and some holidays. Our parks, including the Heritage Trail, also offer great opportunities for cross country skiing. Visit the Parks' website at www.orangecountynyparks.com for more information.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana
County Executive