

SNOW DAY!

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 28 February 2013 14:15 -



Pile up of white stuff closes schools, businesses

With the first big dump of snow this year, residents wiped cobwebs from their snow blowers and shovels as a foot blanketed the area last Wednesday and Thursday.

Classes at Gothenburg Public Schools and Sterling Central (a private church school) were cancelled Thursday as were several businesses throughout the city.

The mayor called a snow emergency Wednesday night through Friday evening, asking residents to move vehicles parked along emergency routes and in the downtown area.

The city street crew rose well before dawn last Thursday to fire up maintainers, a pay loader, back hoe and trucks to scoop emergency routes and streets of the entire town, said city services director Shane Gruber.

“By noon, we already had six inches,” Gruber said.

Man-made mountains of snow rose north of the city airport and near the intersection of Lake Avenue and Highway 30 where it was deposited.

Gruber said crews worked until 9:30 p.m. Thursday and returned to clear streets on Friday.

Aside from having to tow a couple of vehicles from the downtown area, that were not moved

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during the snow emergency, he said the process went smoothly despite the amount and heaviness of the snow.

“We normally get about three to six inches at a time that we can handle without a snow emergency,” Gruber said.

So far this winter, he said the city crew has only had to clear streets during a three- to four-inch snow over the Christmas holidays.

Following the most recent storm, Gruber said most of the community seemed satisfied and grateful for how the city responded in clearing streets.

“I think everyone was happy to see the moisture,” he said.



City administrator Bruce Clymer said snow removal costs are budgeted in labor costs associated with average man-hours per year including overtime.

“This typically works out so some years we may be a little over budget and some years a little under budget,” Clymer said.

For some producers, whose cattle are calving, the storm created havoc as calving season gets underway.

Eastside Animal Center veterinarian Ryan O'Hare said some of their clients lost calves.

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Other new babies experienced frozen ears and tails which parts of may eventually drop off and can be a factor in appearance affecting purebred bull and heifer sales

“We’ll probably see some sickness in some calves as they didn’t get colostrum (in milk) from their mothers,” he explained. “Then when they get chilled, their immune system is compromised.”

A gradual warm up is expected the rest of this week with temperatures in the 40s. A balmy 55 degrees is predicted on Sunday.

Last week’s snow translated into .85 inches of precipitation.

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