NEWS ADVISORY

Feb. 28, 2014

For immediate release

City Responds to Winter Storm

Mayor John Engen has directed City snowplow crews to work at maximum capacity 24 hours a day with a focus on streets designated as Priority throughout the weekend's winter storm. He has also assembled a group of City staff members to return calls to the Streets Division asking for assistance with residential streets and berms across driveways.

The best thing the public can do is stay home except in a case of emergency. Winds are predicted to continue through mid-day Saturday, followed by more snow, and travel will be hazardous. People who must travel should dress warmly,

Mayor Engen drove the City Friday morning from Lincolnwood to Hillview Way, along Reserve Street and through downtown.

"People are using common sense in extraordinary circumstances," he said. "If you can help your neighbor, please do."

Here's a roundup of news:

- City staff are returning calls made to the Streets Division main number at 552-6360. Callers will hear back as soon as is practical. The phone will be staffed during business hours through the weekend. People who have emergencies that require them to leave home should call 911.
- City plows are working on high-traffic streets first and moving through the priority list. Blowing and drifting snow is requiring plows to return for repeat plowing to keep the main streets open. Plow drivers are doing their best to minimize creating berms.
- Parks and Recreation Department plow crews have pulled off plowing trails because of dangerous conditions. They are concentrating on sidewalks and pedestrian access to bus routes. They'll work through the weekend with the hope of having commuter routes open by Monday, weather permitting.
- Pedestrians should use extra care, especially in places where they are sharing the roadway.

Wear reflective clothing and lights at night.

- Mountain Line buses are running at no charge, and we urge the public to take advantage.
- City management has been in touch with Missoula Emergency Services, offering to assign a plow dedicated to emergency responders, and we've been assured that ambulances are getting around without difficulty.
- Currents Aquatics Center will close at 2 p.m. today. Staff will reevaluate conditions on Saturday morning and will reopen at noon Saturday if weather permits. Please check the City of Missoula website and Facebook or local news media for updates. All recreation programs at the Sports & Wellness Center are canceled through Saturday.
- Thanks to local school districts and the University of Montana for closing on Friday to keep travel to a minimum. City Hall is open today until 5 p.m., and necessary City staff members are working through the weekend; management is on call.

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