

OUR TOWNS

Hartington

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Snow Is Piling Up Along Cedar Co. Roads, Creating Headaches For Motorists, Crews

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HARTINGTON, Neb. — Midwestern winters are known for the havoc they can wreak on driving conditions, and areas with uneven terrain are even more susceptible.

The highways surrounding Hartington, Neb., are one such area, and according to one county official, this winter has been "worse than normal."

"This winter, with it snowing since the early part of December, has been fairly cold, so a lot of it hasn't melted," Cedar County Sheriff Larry Koranda said.

As a result, some of the highways have been regularly blowing shut, stopping traffic.

Once the snow has been cleared from the roadways, walls of snow higher than most cars remain on the shoulders in some areas.

There are several reasons this is such an issue for the Hartington area, Koranda said.

"A lot of it depends on the (amount of) snow," he said. "Not only besides the hills, but nowadays farmers are taking out windbreaks and shelter belts, and farming up to the fence lines. There's not a lot of stoppage in the field to stop that snow, so there's a lot of snow blowing across the highways."

"It seems like once you get (those) drifts, and if we continue to get a lot of snow and wind, those cuts fill in quite a bit. It just takes time to get some of the roads open," he said.

That the area has received several big storms this winter hasn't helped, either, he added.

Koranda said the time it takes to clear the roads may vary.

"When it's near-blizzard-like conditions like it's been the last couple storms, the state pulls their plows because of the safety of their workers," he said. "Once it clears up or subsides a little

Winter Road Blues



The snow was so high on many spots on Highway 12 and other roads in Cedar County, that they were impassable for a time. Weeks after the last snowstorm, some drifts remain more than five feet tall. (Travis Gulbrandson/P&D)

bit, the state's back out there. They go out at 3-4 a.m., and some of these last storms, they've been out 24 hours a day getting some of these paths opened up."

The job is done by Department of Roads crews located in Hartington, Laurel and Crofton, although the state workers have help sometimes.

"Some of the past storms this year, they brought some blowers from other areas, like Valentine or Scottsbluff. ... And just to get roads open, they've actually contracted out some of the labor, with construction crews, somebody with the equipment to help them," Koranda said.

Despite repeated blow-ins, the state has kept to the task well, he said.

"The state's doing a great job getting out and getting the roadway open, at least one lane," Koranda said. "When time

allows, they go back and open it up to two lanes, and when time allows again, they get out and push it back even further so there's shoulders there again."

State workers have also assisted on emergency calls when the road conditions get bad.

"The state's been great it comes to medical emergencies

"It seems like once you get (those) drifts, and if we continue to get a lot of snow and wind, those cuts fill in quite a bit. It just takes time to get some of the roads open."

LARRY KORANDA

or trying to get ambulance or fire crews out to the calls," Koranda said. "They would actually lead the ambulance down the highway just to make sure they can get to the hospital or the emergency facility."

By the same token, ambulance crews have assisted in rescuing stranded drivers on blocked-in highways when conditions allow.

"Some of them, obviously, you just can't get to. You just advise people to make sure their tanks are full of gas and to keep their car warm and shut it off every once in a while, with the windows down a little bit so they don't gas themselves," Koranda said.

Public safety is one of Koranda's main concerns when the weather turns stormy, and he advises people to be careful and heed warnings.

"People just have to learn that they need to slow down," he said.

"Take your time, because first of all, you don't know what the other person's going to do, and when you get in some of these cuts, the road might be fine and clear, but you might pop a hill where there's a lot of snow, or it might narrow down to one lane real quickly."

Drivers should always follow media advisories in bad weather, he added.

Another way Cedar County residents are informed of inclement weather or closed roads is through the Nixle system, which kicked off Sunday.

Nixle alerts residents of emergency situations through e-mail and text messaging.

Kevin Garvin, director of Emergency Management for Cedar County, said last month that the system will be used specifically for "community notifications, road closures, evacuations and traffic accidents that require road closures."

Garvin said that the county could have used the system when the area was hit by its first blasts of snow early in the winter.

"(That) would have been a good example to put out a message," he said. "The Department of Roads called, and travel (was) not advised. Highways (were) impassable. We could certainly put that out, and hopefully discourage motorists from traveling these routes. We could also send out a message regarding the timing of the county snowplows."

Cedar County residents can register to receive messages through the Nixle service by visiting www.nixle.com. Registration is free.

Koranda said most Cedar County residents are aware of the problem areas on the highways, but that still leaves drivers who are just passing through.

"We had one storm come through at Christmastime, so there were a lot of out-of-state travelers," he said. "On a federal highway like that, most of the travelers on that are out-of-staters. That's the concern you have. Those people don't know the area, and that's when they get into trouble."

That's why everyone has to be careful, and not take any chances, he said.

"If it comes across in the media (that travel is not advised), they need to listen to that because there's a reason those advisories are out there," he said.

SMITH

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moved to Yankton in 1975. They raised four children, all of whom attended Sacred Heart School.

"Our thinking was that Catholic school allows parents to teach at home and have it reinforced at school on a daily basis," Smith said. "For me, I feel it is very — if not most — important in the middle school years to have that reinforcement. Where a lot of parish schools decide to eliminate those classes, we have fought to keep that part of the school."

In her role within the school, Smith has served two terms on the school board, as well as helped in any way she could when her children were attending the school.

Perhaps the role Smith is most proud of, however, is that

of hospice nurse.

"My husband went through a long illness with cancer, and I stayed home with him through hospice," Smith said. "I am a practicing nurse, so it was an easy decision for me. After he died, I got involved with volunteering with the hospice program."

"I had done, I suppose, 20 different jobs involved with nursing throughout my career, and I thought it was interesting that, as a hospice nurse, I was finally doing the kind of nursing that I had gone into nursing to do in the first place: taking care of really sick people in their home without all of the bureaucracy and without all the machines and the gadgets. It's just care-taking at its very best helping people live fully until they die."

The lessons she learned helping her husband fight cancer gave Smith some insight in how to wage her own battle with the disease.

"My attitude with my own bat-

tle with cancer was: 'God is going to take care of me, because my kids still need me,' and He did," Smith said. "I went through all of my treatments with a very positive and cheerful attitude. I kept up all of the things I had been doing with my various ministries and taking care of myself. God just stayed with me throughout the whole thing, and I knew He was going to be with me and take care of me. He proved me right."

Smith stays very active in numerous activities, but she is most proud of her association with the Cancer Walk For Life, Cancer and Heart Association fund-raisers and Catholic Daughters. She serves Holy Eucharist to shut-in individuals each week and also works with Residents Encounter Christ.

"Residents Encounter Christ (helps) inmates in prison find other like minds so they can support one another in their love of Christ and the practicing of their beliefs," she said. "It gives them a support system they otherwise

would not have."

Smith also is the kitchen manager at the Banquet in Yankton once a month, serving a warm meal and providing hospitality to those who desire it, Rezac added.

However, Smith says she received far more from the school and church than she feels she gave.

"Sacred Heart Church and Sacred Heart School, along with being a practicing Catholic, have been very important in both my and my husband's lives," Smith said. "It has given us the faith to walk through fire when necessary, and always see and build on the good rather than give into despair. If you find the good and build on the good, God will help you rise to do what you need to do."



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SURVEY

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consumer level to top 3.3 percent as early as the middle of 2010. This is a full percentage point above the Fed's acceptable level," Goss said.


The survey's trade numbers showed improvement. New export orders advanced to 55.8 from 51.9 in December, while imports rose to 50 from December's 48.5.

"Exports will be an important component of any significant 2010 economic rebound," Goss said.

Other components of January's overall index:

- New orders increased 57.4, up from 55.5 in December.
- Production or sales increased to 57.9, up from December's 54.4.
- And delivery lead time jumped to 58.4, up from 54.7 in December.

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Press & Dakotan Beautiful Baby Contest 2010

Attention Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Godparents & Friends:

We will be featuring our annual "Beautiful Baby Contest" in print and online on Wednesday, February 24, 2010. If you or someone you know has a child, we would love to include them in our feature!

To enter, simply submit your photo and entry form with the \$10 submission fee by **Wednesday, February 10, 2010.**

First place winners in the following categories will receive a framed winners print and gift certificates to local businesses:

- 0-12 Months
- 13-24 Months
- 25 Months-3 Years
- 4-7 Years
- Multiple Births

Winners will be selected by the staff of Yankton Media, Inc.

Employees and family members of Yankton Media Inc. are ineligible to win.

Beautiful Baby Contest 2010 Submission fee (\$10) must accompany entry form to be valid.

Category #: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

*Submission of this form authorizes the publication of this photo in print and online at www.yankton.net.
Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan • 319 Walnut Street • PO Box 56 • Yankton, SD 57078
Entry Deadline: Wednesday, February 10, 2010