

Genesee County gets ready to take care of snowy roads

Monday, December 06, 2010



Genesee County Road Commission trucks begin to roll out in anticipation of an incoming snow storm



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GENESEE COUNTY (WJRT) -- (12/06/10) -- We've gotten our first taste of winter weather over the last few days.

The snow started coming down last week, covering highways and neighborhood streets. While many may winterize their cars, the Genesee County Road Commission is preparing a fleet of vehicles to remove snow and treat icy roads.

The road commission has to size up its fleet needs every year and make the plan fit within the snow removal budget.

Maintenance Director Anthony Branch says the county snow removal budget is around \$675,000. That money will be used to keep five satellite stations running with 67 people dedicated to removing snow full time. If needed, up to 80 people can hit the highway.

Branch says this year's budget is on par with last year's spending plan for snow removal.

Genesee County has roughly 6,500 tons of salt on hand. The likelihood of running out of salt is slim, unless we have record-breaking snowfall over a long period of time

Such was the case in 2007 when a record amount of salt was used across the country, leaving some communities worried about supplies.

Branch says there is enough money in the budget to handle the salt and staffing level this year.

"Right now we are all prepared. We are going through our equipment to make sure it is up to par. We have ordered up all our materials waiting for the snow to come."

While the road commission prepares for the season, many drivers are doing the same thing.

In the last four days, business has doubled at Belle Tire on Center Road in Burton because of the weather. Customers are coming in to fix broken rims or to replace tires.

"Winter tires are gaining popularity. Last year there was almost a shortage of winter tires," Belle Tire store manager Gary Vredeveld said.

Drivers like Henry Kaluzny are also taking time to winterize their cars. "Oil changes. Make sure I have got enough windshield fluid."

"The most important if you get stranded is to have warm clothes in your vehicle so you wont freeze to death-gloves, hats boots," driver Chris Smith said.

The fleet at the Genesee County Road Commission complex is also getting a checkup.

"Right now, we are all prepared. We are going through our equipment to make sure it is up to par. We have ordered up all our materials waiting for the snow to come," Branch said.

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