

Icy road conditions lead to many accidents; hours of scraping pay off in end

Written by Marty Randall

Wednesday, 29 January 2014 00:00 -

Several motorists have learned in the past weeks that it just doesn't pay to hurry when driving on an icy road.

A bevy of accidents have occurred since, oh, January 15, according to records maintained by the Sheriff's Department. Frankly, it's hard to count the total number deputies have investigated since that date because the number keeps climbing. But it's safe to say the count is in the 30s.

Thanks to crews of the Scott County Highway Department, things were looking up for individuals and families. Staff took the day off on Friday, January 24, because, well, there was very little else they could do. With high winds starting that Friday evening and continuing on Saturday, January 25, Superintendent Jill Baker and crews knew they'd have a busy time on the 25th.

And they did.

Winds whipped snow across previously-plowed roads, so crews once again plowed. And scraped. And scraped. At one point a section of Jack Morgan Road northeast of Austin had to be closed. Vehicles were having a horrible time trying to wend on their ways, so barriers were installed until the wind stopped fighting the plow trucks. It was reopened on Sunday, January 26, because highway employees were again behind the wheels of their trucks plowing and scraping.

"It's been a winter," Baker observed. She said she was planning to soon report to County Commissioners how much money has been spent in January on plowing roads.

However, the department's two-day strategy – and warmer temperatures – paid off. Students got back to school on Monday, January 27, after having four straight days off.

If none of these days are forgiven by state officials, both school districts will see their school years extended to make up for days lost.

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Of all the recent accidents that occurred, and in which snow and ice were factors, only one involved injuries.

On Tuesday, January 21, driver Angela M. Butts, 44, Scottsburg, was driving west on State Road 56 when she lost control of her 2004 SUV because of snow on the road.

The mishap occurred shortly after 2 a.m.

Her Envoy ran off the right side of the highway and struck a tree. Deputies Rex Herald and Justin Cheatham were dispatched to the scene, some 50 feet east of Getty Road in Lexington Township.

Butts experienced chest pain after the accident. Her passenger, J.W. Barger, 26, Scottsburg, had minor facial bleeding. They were treated by Scott County EMS technicians.

Damage to the Envoy was estimated at up to \$10,000. It was towed from the scene.