

?Mother Nature paralyzes the County with a blanket of snow and ice

Written by

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??? As Meteorologists predicted, Mother Nature paralyzed Washington County as it dumped eight to ten inches of snow and up to one inch of ice on the County Tuesday, January 27 and Wednesday, January 28.

Prior to the ice storm that followed four to six inches of snow was dumped early on January 27, Sheriff Claude Combs along with Mayor Bower, Emergency Management, County Commissioners, volunteer fire departments, Salem Fire Department, EMS and Campbellsburg and Pekin Town Marshall set a meeting on January 27 around to 2:45 p.m. to go over the plan of action the County would take.

According to Sheriff Claude Combs the plans of action worked very well with no serious injuries or deaths reported during this storm.

As part of the emergency plan all fire departments throughout the county were manned, with some stations taking their own calls in their district and provided assistance where needed. Salem Fire Department remains manned 24 hours a day but extra personnel was called to the station.

By 5 p.m. Tuesday a Level 2 Emergency warning was issued for Washington County. A Level 2 emergency warning means conditions are a threat to public safety and only essential traffic is recommended, which is to and from work and emergency personnel, all others need to restrict their travel.

As ice continued to blanket the already fallen snow, a Level 1 emergency warning was issued at 7 a.m., Wednesday which put the whole county on a State of Emergency warning which means travel is restricted to emergency vehicles only and was continued until 7 p.m. and reinstated with a Level 2 emergency warning.

According to Sheriff Combs with the help of fire departments, EMS and volunteers, all emergency situations were met. Transports for breathing emergencies and dialysis were taken to Washington County Memorial Hospital. Citizens who were inconvenienced by the lack of electricity were also taken to the Salem Senior Center which was designated a shelter by Mayor Bower and to other family members homes who still had electricity.

At one point the shelter had 25 people housed.

"I thought we handled this situation very well, the 911 Center, law enforcement, EMS, City of Salem and Highway Department worked very well together. Whoever needed help received help.

"During a emergency dispatch an Ambulance did become stuck, but with the help of many people, the assistance to that patient went smoothly." said Combs

"All Fire Departments, City, Law Enforcement Officers and all volunteers did an outstanding job and performed very well." stated Combs.

The Level 2 Emergency was lifted on the County on Friday, January 30, at 5 p.m., as roads were improving but ice and slick spots still remained.

At one point 4,000 Jackson County REMC customers were without power, primarily in Washington County and 29,614 Duke customers in the Corydon/Salem district were without power. As of Friday, January 30, 4,204 Duke Energy customers were still without power. According to Duke Representative, Lew Middleton, all customers had power by Saturday, January 31 by 6 p.m. with the help of additional crews from the region and their companies in the Carolinas who came to help.