



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN, ZAC BURTT & CHANTELE MEYER  
SUSLAW NEWS



**It was a beautiful sight in Historic Old Town Florence on Monday morning as a couple inches of snow covered buildings and streets. While the Florence area got minimal snow, other places in the region got a lot of snow.**

**COLD from page 1A**

City of Florence Assistant City Manager Megan Messmer shared the process used to determine the resources needed to deal with unusual weather conditions in and around Florence.

"In preparation for forecasted storm events, we receive weather briefings and participate in webinars put on by the National Weather Service Portland Office. These briefings are

for Emergency Management and response agencies in their region. Myself and other staff receive this information frequently. We receive this info for heavy rain events, wind events, potential flooding events, high heat events and, in this case, snow and ice events. It is important to note that our Public Works Department is on call 24/7 to address anticipated and unanticipated issues within the City," she said.

According to Messmer,

Public Works Director Mike Miller uses the information to prepare his crews for potential response. In the case of this weekend's forecast, Public Works readied the equipment for sanding operations to respond to ice and snow on the roads. In doing so, they also identify specific staff members as the point people to respond and do the first checks based on the weather.

The city also made sure equipment was ready to respond to downed trees and other hazards.

"Luckily, this weekend was fairly mild in town compared to other areas of the state and on the north coast," Messmer said. "Our crews did respond to a downed tree on Rhododendron Drive early Sunday morning. (Monday) morning they were out early performing sanding operations on city streets and will continue to do so until about noon. We also anticipate that they will resume sanding operations late this

evening or the middle of the night based on the temperature forecast."

Public Works' facilities and parks crews also salt high-traffic walkways at city facilities and some parks, all of which were able to remain open.

Accuweather forecasted additional snow by the end of Tuesday, with greater accumulation possible if the current front moves slowly through this area.

State Rep. David Gomberg, House District 10, released a statement on Monday urging Oregonians to exercise caution if they must venture outdoors.

"A cold front from Canada spread across the Pacific Northwest on Sunday morning, triggering winter storm warnings for areas west of the Cascades. The change is beautiful. But the cold and ice can also be daunting," he said. "This weather is expected to bring heavy snow and sustained temperatures below freezing, resulting

in potential transportation failures, and possible disruptions to power and communications. Winter weather is especially dangerous for anyone experiencing homelessness and can also pose a greater risk for older adults and people with disabilities."

The Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter responded to the conditions by opening the shelter on Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

The shelter, which uses individual, heated Pallet Shelters, will continue to be open nightly through New Year's Eve, Friday, Dec. 31. People needing the shelter can catch a ride from 5 to 6 p.m. at Siuslaw Public Library, Safeway, Linda's Laundry on 37th Street or Fred Meyer. The shelter is located north of town, across from Sand Ranch on Highway 101. Find more details at [www.facebook.com/FECWS](http://www.facebook.com/FECWS).

The Emergency Cold Weather Shelter can use donations of hats, gloves, wrapped snacks, hand warmers and small packs of hand sanitizer.

According to Greg Wood, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw and one of the coordinators

of the FECWS, the small shelters available to the unhoused have been well utilized since they opened last week.

On Tuesday, he said, "We have 22 people here from last night and right now we have people waiting for rides to come out here for tonight. We had three staff members on site for the night and I have just walked around to make sure everyone is up.

The FECWS opens when the temperature nears 40 or the conditions are so challenging it is unsafe for individuals to live outside. The need for volunteers to staff the shelter has been met, to this point in time, and Wood expects that trend to continue while the is in operation.

"We expect to remain open at least through the weekend, and possibly longer if this cold, rainy weather continues," Wood said. "We are very appreciative of the folks that have volunteered and we are very happy to be able to serve these members of our community. ... The support from the community has been overwhelmingly positive and things are going really well, so far."

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