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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commissioners prepare for wintry forecast

ROGERS COUNTY — Rogers County Commissioners are ready for a possible wintry mixture slated for early next week by weather forecasters.

Rogers County residents can expect colder weather in the forecast with highs expected to reach in the low 50s and lows lingering in or near the freezing zone.

Commissioners emphasized the importance of staying ahead of winter storms by equipping vehicles with plows and products used to reduce the impact of frozen precipitation on roads and bridges.

“Since we have switched to a salt-brine system, that puts us in the driver’s seat,” District 3 Commissioner Ron Burrows said. “Mother Nature still controls the weather, but we can control how we respond.”

Burrows said the great thing about being able to stay ahead, is based on weather predictions. “We already know how many days out this storm is for us, so we can start pretreating the roads with this brine,” he said.

The brine allows participating districts to pretreat three to four days ahead of a storm, which will stay in the pavement pores until activated by moisture.

“This really was a game changer for us to invest in the salt-brine system,” Burrows said.

The salt-brine solution can withstand temperatures as cold as -6 degrees Fahrenheit. It is first dissolved in a large mixer using rock salt and water, then travels to large holding tanks, which dispenses into cylinder tanks that are loaded onto trucks. One load can cover 10 miles of a two-lane road.

Burrows has two pickup trucks suited with equipment ready to go, with bigger trucks available if needed.

District 2 Commissioner Chairman Steve Hendrix uses a salt and sand mix and will distribute mostly at intersections before Monday afternoon until they see what the weather will do.

“It is getting that time of year and we are ready for it,” Hendrix said.

Commissioner Hendrix’s Assistant Foreman Allen Carter said they will deploy two salt-and-sand spreader trucks.

“We kind of start off with a few trucks and then if we see we're going to have a big event then we will get more ready,” Carter said.

District 1 Commissioner Dan DeLozier said he has everything ready to get started as well. “We have two pickup trucks right now ready to start. We bought two new brine tanks for the back of the pickups so we can hit our housing additions better.”

Commissioners said they can typically get everything ready within two hours on a moment’s notice if they are surprised with a change in weather conditions.

“If it turns to snow, we can shoot it right along with the snow and it will melt it,” DeLozier said. Cities, counties and states have specific responsibilities in their jurisdictions.

According to TJ Gerlach, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Public Information Officer, ODOT plows all parts of state designated highways, including through city or town limits.

In Rogers County, this is US-412, US-169, SH-20, SH-28, SH-28A, SH-66, SH-88, SH-167, and SH-266. The Turnpike Authority plows I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike.

Gerlach stated they use truck-mounted plows with salt/sand spreaders using a salt and sand mixture to treat roadways to provide traction and some melting action. “We begin preparing the trucks and checking all equipment and lights a few days ahead of forecasted winter weather.’

State crews will monitor conditions a few hours before precipitation is supposed to begin. “Rotating shifts continue until all highways in the county are considered clear,” Gerlach added.