

Mayor's Message: February 2011



Mayor Russ Wall

Due to unusually heavy and frequent snowstorms this winter, many people have called the City with concerns regarding snow removal. Here are some facts that you should know that will help the City to keep the roads clear of snow and also keep sidewalks in the City free of snow and ice.

- 1- Even though sidewalks and parking strips are in the City's right-of-way, the responsibility to clear the sidewalks from snow and ice lies with the adjacent property owner. In other words, the sidewalk in front of, at the side of, or even in the rear of your home or business, is your responsibility. The City is only responsible to clear and maintain sidewalks that are adjacent to City-owned property.
- 2- We have some large stretches of roadway (5400 South, 2700 West, and Redwood Road) that have sidewalks that are over the rear fence of the property owner. Unfortunately, that does not alleviate the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to clear the sidewalks. The City uses Community Service workers (people who owe fines to the City that cannot or choose not to pay the fines with cash) to assist in those difficult areas of the City. We clear those sections as quickly as we have the resources, but cannot always get to all of them. If a complaint comes in about a particular area, the adjacent property owner is subject to a citation.
- 3- Because of budgetary cuts, the City now employs 9 snowplow drivers instead of 12. That means that clearing roads of snow and ice will take about 25% longer because of the reduction of resources. We prioritize the 9 drivers to clear major roads first, residential through-streets next, and lastly, cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads. In prior years we were likely to hit every street within 12 hours of a storm. Because we now have fewer drivers, and because, by federal law, they cannot drive over 15 hours without taking an 8 hour break, we may not get to some of the less-traveled streets until the following day.
- 4- Cars parked on a street during and after snowstorms make maneuvering a snowplow very difficult, especially on narrow residential streets. It creates a safety hazard for the snowplow driver, as well as the parked car, and slows down the snowplowing, making it more difficult to reach all of the streets in the City. Therefore, the City has made it illegal to park on the streets when there is snow. You are likely to get a ticket if your car is parked on the street when the plows come through. We have instructed snowplow drivers to radio in to the Police the license numbers of vehicles violating the parking restriction.

Please know that the intent of the City is to clear the streets as quickly as possible. Your help in keeping the roads clear of vehicles, as well as clearing your own sidewalks, will make getting through winter a little easier for us all. I am aware of many of our citizens who not only clear their own walkways, but will continue down the street clearing neighbors' sidewalks and driveways - just one more reason to be proud of our great volunteer spirit.

If you are able, please consider those around you who may not be able to shovel their walkways. It doesn't take long to clear just one more driveway (since you are already out there). And those of you who are like me, who have convinced their spouse that anything less than the highest horsepower, largest two-stage auger, noisiest (and most expensive) snow blower in the store would bring shame and embarrassment to the family...we especially should take our prize around the block to make the other folks green with envy. Dress warmly and enjoy the snow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russ Wall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.