

From the Mayor...

January 5, 2018

The bitter cold we have experienced recently kept many people indoors over the Christmas holiday. With school out and vacations from work, families spent time together in their homes and celebrated with rest and relaxation.

Even though our City employees were given time off for the holidays, many of them were called out to provide emergency services, road maintenance, trash pickup, and emergency utility repairs. The need for those essential services never stops.

Trash and recycle pickup during the holidays is always done on a modified schedule. Our crews double up when the regularly scheduled pickup day falls on a holiday and gets moved. By doing two days' worth of pickup on a single day, it keeps the rest of the week's schedule regular, thus minimizing disruption.

This year the City observed the Christmas holidays on Monday and Tuesday. As a result, the Monday (Christmas Day) pickup was moved up to the previous Friday. The regular Tuesday pickup was moved back to Wednesday. New Years Day (Monday) was also moved to Tuesday. Many households missed the early Christmas pickup. It certainly created larger volumes of holiday trash. As a result, the New Years Day pickup on Tuesday was a very busy day for our curbside crew!

Holiday trash and recycle schedules are prepared a year in advance. They are always posted on the City's website (warsaw.in.gov). The "Trash & Recycling" icon is very easy to find front and center on the home page. You can also access it directly at warsaw.in.gov/trash. I know missed trash pickup was an inconvenience for many, so I would encourage you to visit our website to view future holiday schedules (Martin Luther King, Jr., Day is one week from Monday, and trash will be picked up on Tuesday).

Information provided by the City about the schedule is also published by various local media outlets leading up to the affected holiday.

Unfortunately, there is no "holiday" scheduling when bad weather hits. In addition to doubling up for holiday trash pickup this time of year, our crews also have to respond when ice and snow threatens road safety. Often times, uncertain conditions dictate long hours clearing roads, in addition to tending to regularly scheduled trash pickup.

You might have noticed that the City pretreats the roads with brine solution in advance of expected ice and snow formation. This may eliminate the need to salt and plow if the weather event is minimal. If not, it will delay the accumulation, thus giving our crews a chance to get an approximately 90-minute head start on the clearing process. The bitter cold we have experienced so far this winter, however, reminds us that salt and brine loses its effectiveness when the temperature drops below 20 degrees.

Street Superintendent Jeff Beeler has trained our crews and equipped our trucks with “smart technology” to distribute measured amounts of salt, based upon temperature and road conditions. Pre-treating with brine and measured salting helps save the City significant money while also minimizing the negative effects of salt to our roads, cars, and lakes. Jeff has been asked to present at a national road conference this spring on the topic.

Cold weather and holidays do not diminish demand for police and fire protection. The bitter cold winters only accentuate the concern for safety, and it is important to appreciate the contributions of our dedicated professionals as well.

I have probably written a similar column in the past, but I can never be too appreciative to the work and dedication of all of our City employees – especially when the mercury drops below freezing. It makes our cold winter holidays a little safer and more secure.