

# Red Deer Advocate

## Worst of the snow is over

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Life was slowly returning to normal on Tuesday after Monday's blizzard that dropped about 22 cm on the Red Deer area.

City snow crews launched a full residential plowing assault on Tuesday that is expected to last about a week to clean up local roads, many of which were almost impassable.

As impressive as it was, 22 cm was not a December record. On Dec. 30, 1975, 32.3 cm fell in Red Deer.

For November, 62.5 cm of snowfall was recorded, compared with an average of 16.9 cm. Environment Canada could not say if that was a record for the month.

The worst of the snow is over, with a few flurries expected overnight Tuesday and clearing on Wednesday.

Temperatures have already begun to drop with a high of -18 C forecast and highs of -22 C expected Thursday and Friday. The windchill on Wednesday will make it feel like -28 C.

It will start to warm a little by Saturday with a high of -12 C forecast and -14 C on Sunday, but still well below the average high of -3 C.

RCMP and sheriffs patrolling Hwy 2 said a few icy spots remained but the road was generally in decent winter driving conditions.

RCMP Const. Steve Molnar, of Innisfail Integrated Traffic Services, said on Tuesday afternoon there were reports of blowing snow in the Olds and Didsbury areas and there were slippery patches and drifting in spots along the route south of Red Deer.

By Tuesday morning, a major collision near Didsbury involving around two dozen vehicles had been cleared away. Traffic had been diverted to Hwy 2A for almost 12 hours while the mess was cleaned up.

A bus was sent to pick up stranded motorists and take them into Didsbury until they could get home.

North of Red Deer, Ponoka Integrated Traffic Services reported that winter driving conditions prevailed but there were no major issues on Tuesday.

"We didn't get it too bad," said RCMP Const. Doug Wareham, adding there were a few cars and semis in the ditch but no serious collisions.

There are slippery spots on the highway though and drivers are urged to take caution.

Associated Cab owner Daryl Frenette said the storm was trying for drivers.

“It doesn’t help that the drivers are getting stuck on the roads that are not being plowed by the city very well,” he said.

“When the roads are really, really bad out there, drivers are not making money. They are providing a service.

“They are not making extra by any stretch of the imagination because they can’t get around.”

Taxi trips to Edmonton and Calgary were blocked on Monday night because of Hwy 2 conditions.

A few drivers couldn’t even get to work because their vehicles were snowed in at home.

It’s expected taxis will be very busy as temperatures drop later in the week. As long as roads are clear, drivers will profit from the extra business.

At Red Deer Airport, Air Canada had to cancel one of its Tuesday morning flights but other than that everything was returning to normal.

Airport authority CEO RJ Steenstra said the flight cancellations and delays at airports cause a “ripple effect” that leads to crews and aircraft not being where they are supposed to be.

While the schedule looks to be back on track, travellers should check with their air carrier before heading to the airport, he said.

In the Prentiss area, a couple of dozen of residences were affected in all by a pair of separate power line breaks overnight Monday and Tuesday morning. Power was restored by Equus, a rural electrification association, by Tuesday afternoon.

In Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools, rural buses are cancelled again today but city routes will be running. All schools will be open.

For other school divisions, parents should check their websites or Facebook pages.

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