



SHAWN HERZOG of Lincoln, an employee of FMA Realty, blows snow from the sidewalk of 14th and M streets Sunday morning. More than a foot of snow blanketed Lincoln Saturday night and Sunday morning.

RYAN SODERLIN/DN

Snow business

Blizzard forces store runs, closures

By IEVA AUGSTUMS
Staff Reporter

Businesses throughout the city were faced with the decision to stay closed or to open Sunday after a blizzard stormed the city Saturday night and early Sunday morning.

Electrical outages, downed telephone lines and shortages of employees caused many businesses to stay closed. Several, however, felt an obligation to serve the community and decided to remain open.

Wayne Goos, store manager of Target at 333 N. 48th St., said that his store stayed open mainly because it was an all-purpose store that served the city of Lincoln.

"People have come in mainly for camping supplies, fuel, cooking stoves, blankets, candles, batteries and snow shovels," Goos said.

Super Saver, 233 N. 48th St., is one of Lincoln's 24-hour grocery stores. Shawn Daily, the office manager, said most customers bought small orders Sunday.

"People who are coming in are

buying a lot of bread and milk," Daily said. "We have also sold batteries for flashlights and radios left and right."

Russ' Market, another 24-hour grocery store chain, closed three of its six stores because of the weather.

Willy Piitz, store manager at Wal-Mart, 4700 N. 27th St., said people started lining up outside the store since 7 a.m.

"Business has been pretty brisk since we opened this morning," Piitz said. "We had people buying chain saws, batteries, flashlights, candles like crazy. Snow shovels seem to be our hottest item at the moment."

Winterizing households and cars is the main focus for many people, said Piitz.

Hardware stores noticed an increase in sales of household repair items, as well as generators, space heaters and oil lamps. An employee at Menards, 3500 N. 27th St., said the customer numbers remained low, but the store would be ready once people assess the damages done to their homes and businesses.

Many retail stores had very few customers because of the weather;

however, many restaurants were overwhelmed with customers.

The Garden Café, 70th and A streets, remained open with an average wait of 15 minutes. Many pizza carryout and delivery restaurants were kept busy filling orders across the city. Papa John's, 1601 Q St., had an average 45-minute wait for carryout. Papa John's was not able to make home deliveries because of the hazardous road conditions.

While some restaurants decided to open, others like Valentino's, 13th and Q streets, and Lazlo's Brewery and Grill, 701 P St., decided to stay closed because they were understaffed and did not want to jeopardize the health and safety of their employees.

Brian Niemeyer, assistant manager of Valentino's downtown, said the decision to stay closed was relayed down to them from their home office. "It was decided that it was not safe for employees to travel to work," Niemeyer said.

Storm-related fire kills one in Omaha

OMAHA (AP) - When the record snowstorm hit Sunday morning and the power went out, they lit a candle.

But it was left unattended and set the house on fire, killing 48-year-old Robbie Coleman. Firefighters rushing to the scene were hampered by heavy snow and downed tree limbs that blocked roads.

Coleman apparently was trapped in her bedroom by the blaze, which started shortly after 4 a.m. Sunday, said Craig Schneider, a fire department spokesman.

Two other people in the house - Ernest Coleman, whose age was unavailable, and Anthony Coleman, 14, - managed to escape unharmed, Schneider said.

The exact cause of Robbie Coleman's death will not be clear until an autopsy is performed, Schneider said.

It took 35 minutes for firefighters

to get to the scene and begin battling the fire, he said.

"There were so many roads blocked," Schneider said. "It's unfortunate that these things happen, but there's nothing that we can do about it."

The fire department responded to as many as six major storm-related fires Sunday, but no one else was injured, Schneider said.

With many of Omaha's power lines still down, the string of fires may not be over, he said. Fire officials had received many calls about live electricity cables that had fallen to the ground and sparked.

Even felled power lines that look harmless should be avoided, Schneider said.

"Power can travel through the lines, through wet surfaces, over tree lines and it can even at very high voltages, it can jump from the cable," Schneider said. "Electricity is very volatile."

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