

Cleanup crews take to streets

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Acting Gov. Kim Robak said, however, that it is uncertain when and if emergency funding will become available.

She said it was rare for federal emergency funding to come before a Presidential Disaster Declaration has been signed, a process that could take weeks.

"But we believe we must do all we can to help find additional resources for our communities," she said.

Robak also said during an afternoon news conference that several hundred members of the Nebraska National Guard have been called to help with the cleanup in both Omaha and Lincoln.

Earlier in the week, power company officials had asked that the state not send additional people to affected areas, Robak said, because they felt it would impede their progress to get power restored.

"We still have 30,000 households (statewide) without power, but we feel there are now many areas where we can safely offer help," she said.

In the Lincoln area, an estimated 13,000 people are still without power, but Lincoln Electric System crews continue to work to repair 79 outages across the city, LES administrator Terry Bundy said.

"We are making good progress," Bundy said. "We hope to have power to the entire city by Sunday."

LES has incurred \$6.2 million in costs during the storm repair, he said, but less than \$200,000 of that total went for materials.

With crews from across the state, LES is paying \$650,000 a day for the workforce, Bundy said.

On campus, landscaping crews have also been hard at work trimming

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 acting governor

trees and clearing fallen limbs and snow.

"The cleanup is going pretty good," said Jeffrey Culbertson, East Campus landscaping manager.

But there is no end in sight for the landscaping crews.

"This will be an ongoing process for the next few months," Culbertson said. "We'll try to save as many trees as we can."

Mayor Mike Johanns commended Lincoln's residents for their work.

"The amount of work citizens have done is remarkable," Johanns said.

The evidence of this work shows up at the city's dump sites, he said. Eleven sites are operating around the city to collect trees.

"Every load citizens bring in is one less that we have to pick up," he said.

Residents should try to be patient at the dumps despite long lines, parks department spokesperson Steve Miller said.

All residential streets should be open today, Johanns said.

The city's traffic signals should all be working again soon, Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said.

The Red Cross closed its shelter at Pershing Auditorium at 4 p.m.

Thursday.

Anyone still in need of shelter was transferred to the city's last remaining temporary shelter at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact the United Way, which is organizing a volunteer cleanup effort to help the elderly and sick.

Volunteers can contact Lincoln Information For the Elderly, League of Human Dignity or the Lincoln Action Program to become involved.

"There has been an overwhelming response to help from across the state," said Darrel Podany, director of the United Way Volunteer Connection.

Lincoln firefighters are conducting a food drive to benefit those hit hardest by the storm. Canned foods are being accepted at every station.

Trick or treating could be treacherous this weekend, Casady said.

"Parents need to use their judgment to decide if their neighborhood is safe for trick or treating," Casady said.

Everyone is working to achieve some degree of normalcy, Johanns said.

"We're just trying to get back to the rhythm of life in the city."

Early snow forces winter precautions

By JOSH FUNK
 Assignment Reporter

Winter has taken the Capital City by storm.

And with the onset of winter, people should prepare themselves, their cars and their bikes for the cold months ahead.

Drivers can prepare for winter driving conditions by planning ahead, said Carol Witforth, assistant coordinator of Lincoln/Lancaster County Emergency Services.

"Common sense is real important in the winter," Witforth said. "Don't risk your life unnecessarily on the roads."

She offered the following tips to keep winter travelers safe:

■ Check weather before leaving.

■ Carry emergency supplies in the car.

■ Call ahead to check road conditions.

A few minor repairs and replacements can help ensure that your car will be running smoothly all winter, said mechanic Randy Connealy of The Garage, 2210 S. Seventh St.

"You should have a good all-around check done to make sure everything is in good shape," Connealy said.

Mechanics recommend that these services be done before the first storm of the year, so they should be done as soon as possible.

"You should have done this stuff last week," said Jeff Harris, a mechanic at D and K Auto Service, 4315 N. 62nd St.

These simple services can keep

people from becoming stranded, mechanics said.

■ Make sure the spark plugs are good.

■ Use the correct viscosity of oil.

■ Check that antifreeze is good for temperature and acidity protection.

■ Check all the belts and hoses.

■ Make sure tires have good tread.

■ Check the brakes.

"It is much easier to make an appointment and drive your car there than it is to be stranded and have your car towed in," Connealy said.

There are also a few other things people can do to make winter driving more bearable, mechanics said.

■ Replace wiper blades.

■ Make sure headlights work.

■ Check the heater.

■ Be prepared for the possibility of being stranded by keeping blankets, a flashlight and some food in the car.

"I usually just replace those (wiper blades) every winter," said mechanic Joe Wilkinson of Midas, 601 N. 27th St.

There are also a few things students can do to prepare their bikes for the winter weather, said Rob Holbrook, an employee at Bike Pedalers, 1353 S. 33rd St.

■ Get mud flaps or fenders to cope with melting snow.

■ Get knobbier or even-studded snow tires for better traction in severe weather.

■ Try to find space inside to store the bike.

Hoagland ponders comeback

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extent to which members of Congress are plugged into the daily decisions made at the federal level."

Hoagland identified four major issues he would seek to address in a campaign.

He said he was concerned with strengthening schools and keeping higher education costs down, retaining the viability of Social Security and Medicare, reducing crime and enhancing neighborhood safety, and cutting back on government regulations that disrupt the free market

economy.

Hoagland was able to win congressional elections in 1988, 1990 and 1992 before losing in 1994 when the Republican Party swept the elections to control both houses of Congress.

Public dissatisfaction with Congress's performance was primarily to blame for his 1994 loss, Hoagland said. Specifically, he cited his support for President Clinton's 1993 budget proposal and his support for an assault-weapons ban as votes that contributed to his defeat.

"In 1994 there was a big wave across the country of anti-Congress sentiment," he said. "I think that was improperly blamed on the Democrats."

Tricia Bruning, executive director of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said Hoagland would bring extensive congressional knowledge and experience to the race. She said Hoagland would put Omaha's interests ahead of his personal ambitions.


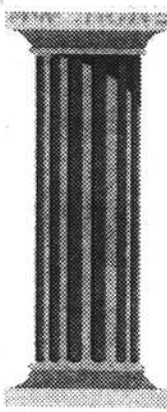
"Peter was that way, and he promises to be that way again," Bruning said.

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