

KS Ready For Snow Emergency

HEAVY BLANKET OF SNOW DESCENDING ON KANSAS; STATE READY TO RESPOND

Kansans have begun to feel the effects of the severe winter storm that entered the state Wednesday and is projected to continue into Thursday afternoon. Some regions are expected to receive as much as 20 inches. Winds are predicted to be 10 to 20 mph with gusts up to 30 mph.

Governor Sam Brownback signed a Declaration of Disaster Emergency for the state to activate the Kansas Emergency Response Plan. The governor visited the State Emergency Operations Center in Topeka and received an overview of current and projected weather conditions, and briefings on the state's response actions. His advice to Kansans was to use caution and common sense.

"I do want to urge everybody in the state: If you don't have to travel, don't," Brownback advised. "Get out a board game, play with the kids, drink a cup of coffee."

Brownback said he is directing state offices be closed from 6 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, to 6 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22, except for essential personnel.

"We're going to be in the State Emergency Operations Center through the night monitoring the situation," said Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general and the director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. "We'll be keeping in contact with emergency managers across the state to see how they're doing and working any requests for assistance they may need."

Mike King, secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation, said the department will have more than 1,000 drivers and 575 trucks equipped to remove snow from the state's highways. Information on highway road conditions and closures is available at www.kandrive.org.

Col. Ernest Garcia, superintendent of the Kansas Highway Patrol, said his troops were ready to respond. The patrol will have 235 troopers patrolling the highways to assist stranded motorists, respond to accidents and perform other calls for service.

In anticipation of continuing snowfalls, a number of school districts have cancelled classes for Thursday and many other public events have been cancelled. The public is urged to check with their local news stations for listings of cancellations and closures.

Information on winter driving tips is available on the Kansas Highway Patrol website at http://www.kansashighwaypatrol.org/press/news_info/winter_drive.html. You can also follow the Kansas Highway Patrol on Facebook and Twitter at www.kansashighwaypatrol.org.

Information on emergency preparedness for home and travel may be found at www.ksready.gov, www.redcross.org and www.fema.gov.

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