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Boone salt supplies in good shape

BY PAUL MCKIBBEN, JUSTIN B. DUKE AND REGAN COOMER • PMCKIBBEN@NKY.COM, JBDUKE@NKY.COM AND RCOOMER@NKY.COM • FEBRUARY 18, 2010

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Local governments in Boone County say they have enough salt to treat icy roads for the rest of the winter even though the area has been hammered with record snowfall this month.

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Boone County Engineer Greg Sketch said the county has used about 5,000 to 5,500 tons of salt, costing about \$325,000. He said the county has plenty of it.

"We keep getting it in so we keep refilling our new dome," he said. "And that's really helped a lot because that gives us a lot to start with so that ... we won't ever run low."

With three major storms this month, February 2010 is now the snowiest February on record for Cincinnati. The area had 23.1 inches of snow through Feb. 15, according to the National Weather Service. The previous record was 21.4 inches in February 1914.

Despite facing a rapid succession of snow storms, Florence is doing OK, said Public Services Director Bob Townsend.

"We actually didn't use much salt during the (Feb. 15) storm," Townsend said.

Throwing down salt while it's still snowing means the salt will eventually just get plowed away, he said.

Once snow storms subside and plowing has started, then the city will begin salting, Townsend said.

"A big storm like this, we'll use just about as much salt as a small storm," he said.


Like Florence, Walton didn't use much of its salt supply, Mayor Phil Trzop said.

"We're ready to go for the next storm," he said.

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The city of Union pays Spillman Lawncare in Dry Ridge to treat its wintry roads. In Union, 400 tons of salt have been used this winter with 100 tons on order. City Commissioner Bob Kelly, who also serves as the city's commissioner of public works, said he is not worried about running out of salt at this point because Spillman Lawncare owner Greg Spillman assures him that he has access to plenty of it.

Currently the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's District 6 which includes Boone County has 10,000 tons of salt, which is low, but has 17,000 tons on order, according to spokeswoman Nancy Wood.

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Each season they start out with 30,000 tons.

Lots Of Overtime For Some

During snow storms, plow crews work around the clock, split up into 12-hour shifts. Despite having employees working at all times during storms, Florence doesn't take a big financial hit, Townsend said.

"The guys are getting a lot of overtime, but we budget for it," he said.

Sketch said since the first event on Dec. 7, the county has spent approximately \$100,000 in overtime. He said that is a lot. The amount was through Feb. 14. He estimates the county will have probably \$110,000 to \$115,000 in overtime if one counts the three days of Presidents Day week.

The state is not really using a lot of overtime compared to last year. Wood estimates between six to eight days of overtime.

"It's just the nature of the game," she said. "It's not a lot to the people who need to get to places. Six days worth of overtime is worth people being able to be mobile."

This season, District 6 has spent about \$3.3 million including salt, labor and equipment.

Walton's three-man crew worked hard for about 23 hours to get roads clean from the Feb. 15 storm, Trzop said.

"The guys did a great job," he said.

When the Walton Fire Protection District gave its old station to the city's public works department, old beds were left behind, which allowed plow drivers to get rest during the storm, he said.

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