

Severe weather warning: More snow on the way

by Cheryl McDermott

All you have to do is look outside to see that Central Oregon is in the midst of a severe winter storm â€” blowing snow flurries, vehicles slipping and sliding on largely unplowed city streets, neighbors shoveling buried driveways. But according to the National Weather Service (NWS), it is about to get a lot worse with accumulations of up to 10 inches of snow possible by Tuesday night.

The NWS issued a â€”Severe Weather Warningâ€™™ which is in effect from Monday evening through Tuesday night. Snow, heavy at times, may result in accumulations of â€”at leastâ€™• 6 to 10-inches at some locations. Areas mostly west of Highway 197 in North Central Oregon and Highway 97 in Central Oregon will be heaviest hit, NWS reported.

Areas east of Highways 197 and 97 will get off easier, with 3 to 6-inches possible. The heaviest snowfall is expected during daylight hours Tuesday, the warning stated.

Affected cities include Bend, Redmond, La Pine, Prineville, Dufur, Madras, Maupin and Moro.

Elsewhere in the state, residents in the Eugene area are seeing the results of continued heavy snowfall, saturated ground and mudslides. According to Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), dozens of fallen trees and recent snowstorms prompted a total closure of Highway 126W and Highway 36 between Willamette Valley and the Central Oregon Coast.

ODOT said the mudslide with large trees and rocks forced closure of 126W at milepost 25, about ten miles east of Mapleton at 1 a.m. Sunday morning. The earliest possible time ODOT estimated it would be cleared is late Sunday night.

Fallen trees and power lines combined with what was described as "near-whiteout" conditions remain on Highway 36 from Deadwood to Mapleton, ODOT reported. Highway 36 westbound is closed at Cheshire, and eastbound Highway 36 is closed at Mapleton.

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