

PennDOT is pessimistic about snow removal

HARRISBURG - The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is about to face another dilemma ... Winter.

"We have yet to recover from the \$85 million cost of last Winter, and some forecasters are predicting another severe snow season," George S. Pulakos, acting Secretary of Transportation, commented Monday.

"The tremendous Spring road break-up that followed brought PennDOT to its knees and made our fiscal condition even more critical. Now, it is almost Winter again and we must prepare for snow and ice removal on the 45,000 miles of state roads.

"But, our major problem is that there will be even less to spend than last Winter," Pulakos lamented.

"Pothole repair and resurfacing of the worst roadways consumed much of our funds and the highways construction program has been halted since June, 1977. And, we need about five million dollars in state funds for nearly 700 high priority

federal-aid safety projects," the Secretary explained.

What this means, according to Louis G. O'Brien, PennDOT's director of Maintenance, is that PennDOT will be forced to reduce its snow removal efforts just to stay solvent and still meet the needs of motorists for safe travel.

"Our main efforts will be snow removal during the hours of 4 a.m. to 10 p.m., with only emergency patrols available outside this time period," O'Brien noted.

PennDOT will service three types of roadways during the coming Winter season, he said: expressways and high volume traffic routes, secondary and low volume traffic routes, and the rural road system. Expressways and main traffic routes will receive salt, but only in amounts required to keep traffic moving.

Salt regulation will be done by calibrating all salt spreaders on state and rented vehicles.

The use of chemicals also will be drastically



Those snowdrifts of last Winter are just a memory now, but in a few weeks they may be harsh reality. The Pennsylvania Department of

Highways says it does not have the means to keep highways and roads cleared as much as it would like to.

reduced on secondary and rural roads and most snow removal on these systems will be done before and during the morning and afternoon peak traffic times.

A salt anti-skid mix will be spread on hills and curves of secondary and rural roads to keep them passable, the maintenance director commented.

"We hope this program reduction will not cause severe problems. It will require that motorists drive at reduced speeds and in well-maintained vehicles," he pointed out.

The limiting of salt and chemicals should reduce environmental damage and inhibit future damage to bridges and concrete roadways.

PennDOT district engineers and county superintendents have contacted school superintendents and school bus operators to advise them of legal requirements that

school buses must carry chains and must use them on snow and ice-covered roads.

Winter plans also include contracts with more than 470 cities, boroughs and townships to cinder and plow on some, or all, state roads in those communities.

According to Pulakos, this is a very successful

program. "It just makes sense for local municipalities to remove snow on state highways that they must drive over to clear their own roads," he said.

"Without the cooperation and help from local officials, I don't know how we would have gotten through last Winter, or can get through

this one, especially in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and other large communities," Pulakos related.

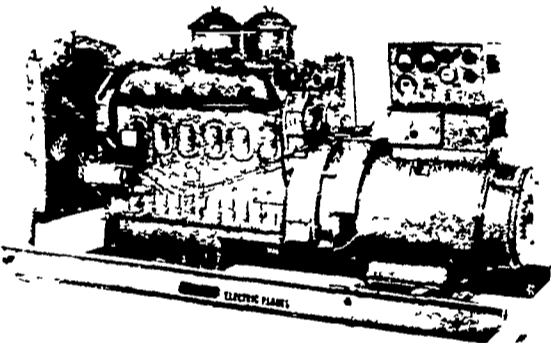
"Whatever money is saved by these reductions, or from a less severe Winter, will be used for spring road repair programs which will benefit the public on a year-round basis," Pulakos concluded.

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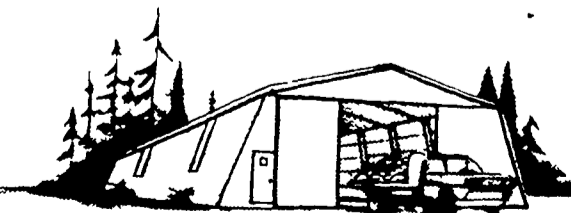
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