

York's cleanup crews get a hearty meal of appreciation

By ANGIE MASON
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Chip Lewis, a parks and recreation worker for York, sits in his plow truck and eats some fried chicken. A local restaurant gave workers a free meal in appreciation for the department's work during the recent snow storms. (Daily Record/Sunday News -- Bil Bowden)

By Friday, the days had started to blur together for the crews that have been working to keep York's streets clear.

They'd been working long shifts, followed by maybe four or five hours of sleep, then hitting the streets again. On some nights, some of them didn't get home, crashing with fellow employees.

"It's been rough," said Patrick Banks, a plow operator for the city's highway bureau.

At noon on Friday, they took a break for lunch

from cleaning up after the two snow storms that have hit York in the past week. It came courtesy of someone who appreciated their efforts.

Annette Fisher, who with her husband owns Bair's Fried Chicken at York's Central Market, dropped off 150 pieces of fried chicken and two trays of potatoes



Paul Walters was among the city road workers who were treated to a fried chicken lunch on Friday in appreciation for their efforts during the recent snow storms. (Daily Record/Sunday News -- Bil Bowden)

to feed the workers that have been clearing York's streets.

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Fisher said she was sitting at home, watching crews work on the news and wondered what she could do to thank them.

"They're putting in unmeasurable hours, lack of sleep, they're not eating right," she said.

She thinks many people just think about when the plow is going to get to them and don't think about the time the crews put in, often away from their own families.

"They've sacrificed a lot to keep the roads open," she said.

Banks said Wednesday, when the most recent storm dumped a second round of nearly 2 feet of snow on York, it "killed" the crews. When people stayed off the streets, it helped, he said, but when vehicles would get behind or pass plows, it made things difficult.

"The snowstorm beat us," said Jay Johnson, another plow operator. "We stayed out around the clock."

Johnson and Banks said they were happy to have the help of contractors who brought in front-end loaders to help clear alleys, where they said plows can't really reach.

"I got stuck in a snowdrift yesterday," Banks said, noting it took a loader and a backhoe pushing and pulling to get his plow out.

Those out to clean up the snow included

highway employees as well as those working for city parks, sanitation, sewer maintenance, the wastewater treatment plant and sometimes the electrical bureau, said Tom Landis, superintendent of parks, recreation and sanitation.

The city has tried to keep the crews well fed, bringing in subs or a grill, on which they could fry up egg sandwiches or hot dogs.

Landis thanked Fisher for Friday's chicken.

"So often, these guys and the work they do is not recognized by the community," he said later. "These guys are hard workers. They put forth a tremendous effort for us."

He added that when the employees finally do go home from work, they often have to dig out their own homes.

Banks said he was surprised someone wanted to offer them lunch, but Bair's is their favorite spot.

"(Annette) takes care of us," he said.

CITY UPDATE

By Friday, some city roads were in good shape, and some others still needed work, said Tom Landis, superintendent of parks, recreation and sanitation.

The city planned to close some streets for snow hauling Friday and Sunday evenings. Saturday,

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was "basically a day of rest," for the crews, said Jim Gross, the city's public works director, who noted that contractors are as tired as the city's employees.

Cleanup from the two storms that hit the York area will likely cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000, Gross said.

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