

Subject: WSDOT NEWS: Stevens and Snoqualmie now open - avalanche crews working at White

Washington State Department of Transportation News WSDOT Headquarters - PO Box 47322 - Olympia, WA 98504-7322

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Jan. 2, 2009

9 a.m. update

Public Road Condition Inquiries: Call 5-1-1/ out of state callers call 1-800-695-ROAD (7623).

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OLYMPIA - The second of WSDOT's three primary east-west routes opened this morning, with US 2 now open over Stevens Pass. I-90 over Snoqualmie Pass opened to all traffic at 8 p.m. Thursday while US 12 - White Pass remains closed due to avalanche danger.

Lighter-than-expected snowfall allowed crews to work at Stevens Pass early this morning. On Stevens Pass, chains are required for all vehicles, except those with four-wheel or all-wheel drive while traction tires are required on Snoqualmie Pass.

Highway 20 at Newhalem (milepost 121) also remains closed because of avalanche danger. An avalanche technician will assess the conditions today, and will be prepared to do avalanche control if necessary.

Southwest Washington was hardest hit overnight and WSDOT's Avalanche Control Crews are working at White Pass today.

Forecasts call for a short weather break in the mountains and throughout Eastern Washington over the weekend, but with significant snow and ice already on the highway, drivers should still prepare for winter driving conditions. Motorists will encounter narrow lanes in places and should be alert for snow removal equipment.

The next big mountain snowfall is expected Sunday afternoon and WSDOT Avalanche Control Crews will be monitoring conditions at all mountain pass highways over the weekend.

Know Before you go:

•Get information from our Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov> before you leave your home or office.

•511 - This driver information phone line provides current traffic, incident and closure information. TTY users can call 1-800-833-6388. Out-of-state callers can access the information at call 1-800-695-ROAD (7623).

•Mountain pass conditions are available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/ <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/> .

•At www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter> drivers can find WSDOT's winter driving-related information, including preparing a vehicle for winter driving, safe driving tips and mountain pass travel advisories. The WSDOT winter site also offers information about chains, winter tires and how WSDOT maintenance crews work in winter weather.

•On WSDOT's Web site, www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather> drivers can look at roadway temperatures and see camera images from across the state.

•At www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts> a map shows highway incidents and closures.

•Sign up for news. WSDOT offers subscribers more than 25 specialized e-mail alerts, including news and information for freight haulers, construction related traffic revisions, project updates from all around the state, and timely updates on pass conditions. Visit www.wsdot.wa.gov <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov> and click the link for "E-mail updates."

•Twitter users can add WSDOT to their personal accounts at: <http://twitter.com/wsdot/> <<http://twitter.com/wsdot/>> . Go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/inform/twitter <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/inform/twitter> for more details.

On the Road:

•Overhead and roadside electronic signs •Highway advisory radio - WSDOT advises drivers to program 530AM and 1610AM on your radio.

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WSDOT keeps people, businesses and the economy moving by operating and improving the state's transportation systems. To learn more about what we're doing, go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/news <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/news> for pictures, videos, news and blogs. Real time traffic information is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic <outbind://48/www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic> or by dialing 5-1-1.

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