

Still digging out in Thermop

by Cindy Glasson

After an unusually mild fall with warm temperatures and sunny skies, winter came in with a vengeance, dropping mounds of snow all over Hot Springs County.

According to the National Weather Service in Riverton, the first storm hit us Dec. 21, covering the ground with 8.5 inches of snow, causing school closures and dicey road conditions.

Before it even had a chance to melt, we were slammed on Christmas Eve and

Christmas Day with an additional 12 to 18 inches, depending on where you lived within the county.

While it made for a beautiful, white Christmas, it also clogged streets and driveways, creating a mess of stuck vehicles and several fender benders as folks tried to get around.

The latest event started on Sunday night, Dec. 28, leaving approximately three inches on the ground by 9 a.m. Monday

This is being followed by bitterly cold

temperatures and the weather service indicates temperatures will remain below normal for this time of year at least through New Year's Day.

Wyoming Department of Transportation, Hot Spring County and Town of Thermopolis road crews worked throughout Christmas Day struggling to even keep up with the snow. For a detailed plow priority map of the Town of Thermopolis please see page 12. The county and state have similar road priority guidelines they operate under.



Moving the snow every which way

Residents took to digging themselves out any way they could Friday after Thermopolis received a staggering 12 to 18 inches of snow.

-Lara Love photo



The Herring Family's two story detached garage goes up in flames early Monday morning.
-Heather Herring photo

Family has very rough start to their Monday

by Lara Love

Heather Herring woke up around 5 a.m. Monday, Dec. 29 to her dogs barking like crazy.

They were trying to tell her something was very wrong outside. An intruder, of sorts, was trying to get to her family home. A detached two-story garage was on fire.

Meanwhile, a passer by was calling the fire into 911 and Thermopolis Volunteer firemen arrived within minutes.

Herring, her husband Joe, their two children Chase and Jolieann and the family pets vacated the house. The heat was causing windows to crack and break. Sparks were flying onto the porch. All they could do was hope the house didn't light up.

"The firemen were just amazing," said Herring. Their quick response time and selfless actions doused the fire before it caught

any surrounding structures on fire. According to Herring they were sloshing around in 8" of slushy water while ice was forming on their uniforms. According to the National Weather Service, the temperature around the time of the blaze was 5 degrees.

The building was in close proximity to The Shoppe, a shed behind the business and sits across the alley from Carquest Auto Parts. "I am glad all the businesses around the garage were saved," said Herring.

The garage was used for storage and according to Herring did not contain anything of real high value. However, the Herring's two vehicles parked near the garage both suffered a significant amount of heat damage. "It bubbled up the paint and ruined some the windows," said Herring.

Thermopolis Fire Chief Mark Collins said the Herrings will be

turning the claim over to their insurance and any investigation will go through them. The garage was a total loss along with all its contents.

Herring is thankful for a passerby who let her children sit in his pickup to stay warm during the disaster. The fire cut an overhead power line and they lost electricity in the family home. "I couldn't even offer the firemen coffee because I didn't have any power," said Herring.

By 6 a.m. the firemen were wrapping up and feeling hungry. The manager of Blairs Super Market opened the store so they could buy supplies to cook breakfast.

"It could have been so much worse," said Herring of the damage. She is very thankful to have just a stinky house to deal with instead of an even larger pile of ashes.