

Snow Fighter Appreciation Days

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Land of 10,000 Snowplows



Learning Objectives: At the End of this Session...

- How to impact local political body (city council etc.) to pass resolution in honor of snow fighters
- Earned media methods an agency can use to get positive press coverage for event, including print, radio, and TV press releases
- Secure enthusiastic buy-in from their own employees.

Why Do We Do Winter Maintenance?

Two primary reasons - established by research

Safety – Marquette University study showed proper use of road salt resulted in:

- Crashes reduced by 88%

- Injuries reduced by 85%

- Accident costs reduced by 85%

University of Waterloo Study showed proper use of road salt resulted in a 95% reduction of crashes on four-lane highways

Related University of Waterloo study showed that chloride levels were reduced by 50% when best practices were used

Safety plus Mobility

Study by Global Insights looked at the impact of a one day shutdown for a State due to a winter storm. They found:

A one-day major snowstorm can cause a state \$300-\$700 million in direct and indirect costs

The economic impact of snow-related closures far exceeds the cost of timely snow removal

Snow related shutdowns **harm hourly workers** the worst

Other studies have shown that safe and sustainable snow fighting when applied to a winter storm pays for itself in the first 25 minutes of operations

Plus, a high level of service is what we expect from public services

So Why an Appreciation Day?

- You know why you do winter maintenance, but does your community?
- Even more importantly, do your plow drivers?
- They are the ones out there at 3 a.m. when everyone else is home in bed
- When does their hard work and commitment ever get recognized?
- We know that recognition is one of the most effective non-monetary ways to reward workers, so...
- Recognize them!

OK, It's a Good Idea, But..

- We have quite a lot of things to do round here anyway...
- I do not have the first idea about how to organize such a thing...
- Me saying thank you is one thing, but how do I get the community to say thank you?
- And what about the media? I do not like having to deal with the media!
- Great idea but how to implement?

First – Identify Your Theme

- There are a number of themes to consider for Appreciation Day ---
 - Safety for school children
 - Commerce and the local economy
 - Road safety in general
 - Access for emergency services
 - Open day for the community
- Building your event around one of these, or others, provides a “hook” for the media to promote your messaging

Next – Choose your Location

- Your theme will help
- For example, if it is going to be about school safety, work with the school district and use a school parking lot
- If it is commerce, work with a local mall
- If it is emergency services, do it at a fire station

What the Location Must Have

- Enough space to showcase equipment
- A place to have short presentations and informational signage (“tell the story”)
- A place to provide refreshments to ensure a captive audience
- A place for people coming to the event to park

Getting the Politicians On-Board

- Politicians love resolutions (basically a bunch of “whereas” statements along with photo opportunities)
- Work to get them to adopt such a resolution for the Appreciation Day
- “But what about the wording?” you ask...

RESOLUTION No: _____

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SNOW FIGHTER APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, (provide information about winter weather in State/county/municipality)¹;

WHEREAS, winter precipitation contributes to approximately 1300 people killed and 117,000 injuries on highways nationwide each year²;

WHEREAS, _____ road-miles and _____ lane-miles of public roads in _____ keep our residents connected and the economy moving throughout the year;³

WHEREAS, road users travel _____ miles on _____ roads per year;²

WHEREAS, clearing snow and ice cuts winter weather-related crashes up to 90%;⁴

WHEREAS, economic studies have found that severe winter events where roads are closed can cost larger Snowbelt States 300-700 million dollars per day until roads are cleared;⁴

WHEREAS, net costs related to snow emergencies have a severe impact on wages, tax revenue, and retail sales; with a disproportionate impact on hourly workers;⁴

WHEREAS, salt deicing operations pay for themselves within 25 minutes of application and generate \$6.50 in benefits for every dollar in cost after the first four hours;⁴

WHEREAS, the year-round planning for winter storms and investments in equipment and technology are critical to the well-being of our citizens;⁵

WHEREAS, emergency snow fighters interrupt time with their families at any hour and at a moment's notice to protect drivers and serve their communities;

and WHEREAS, the emergency work done by front-line snow fighters have saved and will save an unknown number of our citizens;

WHEREAS, _____ recognizes and appreciates the critical work of our snow fighters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
_____ names (Month & Day) "Snow Fighter Appreciation Day"

It's fill in the blanks
All the talking points are
referenced
You can add things related
to themes
In short, it's easy!

Source: American Highway
Users Alliance

¹ <https://www.currentresults.com/Weather/US/average-annual-state-precipitation.php>

² https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/weather/weather_events/snow_ice.htm

³ Information for States available from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics.cfm>, local information may be obtained from State DOTs. Tables HM-10, HM-60 & VM-3

⁴ <https://www.roadwaysafety.org/sites/default/files/programs/attachments/clear-winter-roads-brochure.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.highways.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/road-salt-primer-final.pdf>

Cool – the Politicians are Done!

- Well, you will likely have to invite them to speak at the event...
- Next up is the press
- And for that you need a press release, and you need to know who to contact
- Your city council (or county government) probably has a press office or press liaison person so they are a good place to start
- But what about that press release!

Sample Press Release

Snowfighters Appreciation Day

On _____ 2018 the City/County/State of _____ will recognize and say “thank you” to the men and women who respond to Mother Nature’s snow storms. This reception will be held from _____ to _____ at _____. Snowfighters will attend this event along with _____ who will deliver remarks regarding our snow fighting infrastructure. Tours and demonstrations of our equipment will be onsite or interested parties can schedule a tour following this event. Refreshments will be served during the event.

QUOTE FROM DOT OFFICIAL/ORGANIZER

SAMPLE QUOTE “We want to say thanks to our snow fighting team because they are the neighbors who wake before sunrise to plow and treat our highways and streets with salt/related additives to ensure our ability to conduct commerce, transport students safely, and assist first responders to do their jobs efficiently regardless of bad weather,” said _____.

When winter storms turn roads to ice, deicing them with salt reduces accidents by up to 88 percent and injuries by up to 85 percent. Impassable roads can also cost a state economy as much as \$700 million a day in lost commerce with hourly workers being especially harmed.

Is That All We Have to do for the Media?

- Pretty much, but cookies help too (and coffee may be critical...)
- It is all about providing them good information with a human touch and then following up
- You could also prepare them about the resolution – let them know that it will be considered in a given council meeting

What Else do we Need to do?

- You need to bring some of your people so they can all be there to be thanked so work with any relevant labor unions
- You need to have some of your equipment – bigger is better – but make sure it is clean and safe for kids to explore
- Coffee and snacks always help
- Some banners and also some sign boards
- Do not forget start time and end time

Anything Else?

- Yes, have fun!
- Some places ask local children to name the snow plow trucks
- The trucks are then referred to by that name all through the winter season (so you could do follow up press releases for example...)
- Others have school classes paint the snow plows
- Leverage your event via the “1 to 10 rule”

What Does it Really Look Like?

- An example from Minnesota, done by the DOT in the Twin Cities area
- Proclamation from the Governor
- Done at a local mall
- Some short speeches (county commissioner and state commissioner of transportation), then coffee, hot chocolate, and baked goods
- Great equipment and even a snow plow simulator for tours

Thanks.....But...

- Is there a resource we can utilize for our own event?
- Visit this website -

Snowfighterday.com

What Sort of Resources?

- The Resolution and the Press Release
- Lots of event ideas
- A calendar for promoting your event
- A newsletter where you can learn what others have done
- A community of professional colleagues focused on recognizing their winter maintenance crew

Questions?