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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Provides Update on Winter Storm Safety

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 17, 2021) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear said road crews are continuing to work around the clock to clear roads as the state prepares for its third winter storm in eight days, expected to start this evening.

“We have now made it through two winter storms, with a third on the way. I’m happy to be able to say we had a relatively quiet night, but let me stress that – even with a bit of a break in the weather – it’s still important to limit travel,” said Gov. Beshear. “If you must travel, it’s still important to be very careful. Slow down, watch out for snow plows, salt trucks and other emergency vehicles.”

The Governor said the State Emergency Operations Center is currently activated at Level 3, supporting the power outage response and the winter storm recovery. As of Wednesday morning, 44 counties and 24 cities have declared states of emergency.

The Governor said tomorrow, regional vaccination centers will stay open. If it’s too difficult or dangerous for Kentuckians to reach their appointments, Gov. Beshear encouraged them to reschedule using the link in their appointment confirmation email.

Weather Update

- Multiple rounds of wintry weather are likely to impact the region starting Wednesday afternoon through early Friday morning.
- Snow, sleet, freezing rain and a cold rain will be possible across the region.
- The best potential for snow accumulations is expected to be across Central and Eastern Kentucky. Ice accumulations under a quarter inch will be possible across Southern and Eastern Kentucky.
- Frostbite and hypothermia can occur if people are outdoors for extended periods of time, especially in single-digit temperatures.

- Winter storm warnings and advisories have been issued for Kentucky. To learn more, click [here](#).
- Click [here](#) to view the National Weather Service forecast provided at 11 a.m. EST.

Power Outages

- There are widespread outages across Eastern and Southeastern Kentucky. As of 8 a.m. EST, there are approximately 96,000 Kentucky customers without power, with numerous counties reporting downed trees.
- Power has been restored to approximately 58,000 customers after outages peaked at more than 154,000.
- Work crews in Eastern Kentucky – especially the Jackson and Pikeville highway districts – are still dealing with falling trees and downed power lines.
- Department of Highways maintenance facilities are still without power in five counties – Boyd, Floyd, Lawrence, Magoffin and Martin.
- One consequence of power outages is that gas pumps can't operate. Yesterday, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) began hauling motor fuel into the area so crews can refuel equipment, and those efforts will continue today.
- Power outages have also impacted traffic signals. Treat any dark signals as a four-way stop.
- Clearing downed trees will be a major task today in impacted areas. Division of Forestry crews are out in high impact areas. Kentucky National Guard teams are on standby to assist the Forestry crews to remove cut debris.
- Kentuckians experiencing a downed power line or power outage should contact their local utility company. If possible, use an alternate source of heat but be aware of the dangers of alternate heat sources and carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves or charcoal grills always should be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm> for more information.

“During this event, the weather created physical damage to the infrastructure that transmits and delivers the electricity to households. Electric companies must respond safely, swiftly and efficiently to restore service to large numbers of affected customers,” said Kentucky Division of Emergency Management Director Michael Dossett.

Director Dossett said there are four steps necessary to restore power:

- Assess the extent, locations and severity of damage to the electricity system;
- Provide the physical and human resources required for repairs;
- Prioritize sites/components for repair based on factors including the criticality of the load and the availability of resources to complete the needed repairs;
- Implement the needed repairs and reassess system state.

“As such, households may experience times of intermittent or extended outages as the electric utilities create a safe environment for work to move through the phases of restoration,” said Director Dossett. “Electric utilities are implementing their mutual aid agreements to ensure

everyone is working together to have the resources. Utilities are cooperating and some aid is coming from out of state.”

Road Conditions

- KYTC crews are treating and plowing statewide and report most highly traveled priority A routes are passable. Plows are making headway on secondary, lower-volume routes.
- Several areas are severely affected, especially eastern and northeastern counties.
- At this time, Kentucky State Police (KSP) reports no interstate closures. However, the situation is fluid and KSP may have to close an interstate in the event of a collision or additional winter weather that is expected to arrive later this evening.
- All 16 KSP posts located throughout the commonwealth continue to report slick and hazardous road conditions. Beginning Monday evening and into this morning, KSP has responded to multiple vehicle collisions throughout the state with several resulting in fatalities. The hazardous, icy roadway conditions are believed to be a contributing factor.
- Kentuckians should refrain from traveling if at all possible. Please stay home and allow emergency responders to do their work during this winter storm.
- Kentuckians are urged to tune in to local media for information on weather, and visit snowky.ky.gov for snow and ice resources and goky.ky.gov to check road conditions.

“Our front-line snow-fighters are still out there: from Lyon to Lawrence, Paducah to Pikeville, Hickman to Harlan, Clinton to Campbell and all parts in between. More than 2,000 employee team members plus contractors across the commonwealth are working hard to keep our people safe,” said KYTC Secretary Jim Gray. “I also want to commend the state Division of Forestry, which has provided chainsaw crews to help us clear downed trees in a number of eastern counties. They’ve been a tremendous help. Please limit your travel, drive very carefully and allow extra time to get where you’re going.”

Wellness Support

Kentucky National Guardsmen are currently providing assistance in Boyd, Carter, Crittenden, Elliott, Floyd, Greenup, Jackson, Laurel, Lawrence, Leslie, Magoffin, Menifee, Owsley and Rockcastle counties.

Guardsmen are assisting with wellness checks, transporting those in need to warming stations and shelters, providing crews to transport medical staff and providing debris removal teams to assist the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

There are currently 23 warming centers open, with another 16 on standby. There are six emergency shelters open, with one on standby.

KSP troopers are also responding to wellness checks and helping Kentuckians as needed. If you need help, please contact a KSP post directly. KSP is requesting Kentuckians only utilize 911 for emergencies.

For additional information on this week’s news updates from Gov. Beshear [click here](#).

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