



Snow Plowing Safer for City of MV

The new public works restructuring offers safer and quicker response to plowing city streets

MOUNT VERNON - The consolidated *Division of Public Works* offers Mount Vernon residents an improvement in managing city streets to keep them clear and safe during events of heavy snowfall. Under the new organizational structure, a new "Snow Plowing Crew" list has been developed which includes crew members not only from the street department, but staff from public buildings and lands, parks, and cemetery departments. Training is underway as the crew members are becoming more familiar with the newer equipment and the designated areas of the city needing plowing.

At the November 23, 2020 meeting, City Council approved the new organizational structure which allows for the addition of six more crew members to be able to help out during winter storms. Prior to the reorganization, seven crew members from the street department alone were tasked with the demanding overtime duties of clearing the city streets. Time on the road for the crew members ranged from 8 hours to 48 hours depending on the severity of the winter storm. So far, the administration is pleased with how well the training is going.

Public Works Director, Tom Hinkle, likes the direction the city is taking and knows that it will take some time to get to know the ins and outs of snow removal with new people. "We are definitely in a learning curve right now," said Hinkle. "But, the addition of six new crew members is putting our staff in a much safer position. The storm that happened on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was very difficult and had one staff who worked over a twelve hour shift after taking a few hours off from working eight hours before that. This allows us to protect employees who may tire from the demanding job of removing and plowing snow."

The city recently purchased a new International dump truck complete with the snow plowing package that replaces a 14-year old truck. Keeping as many vehicles on the road as possible during the winter storms is something that Darren Tyson, Assistant Director of Streets, likes to see.

"Before the restructuring, we would have four of our plows on the streets," said Tyson. "Now, we can have all five of our plows out working the five designated areas of town."

Tyson, who is all too familiar with the snow plowing protocol, likes leveraging a more aggressive approach to winter storms than what the city was able to provide before. In extremely demanding situations, the use of the one-ton truck would be used in the downtown area to allow the other five larger trucks to tackle the other areas. "It's less stressful for the crew which is also

much safer. It can be pretty demanding pushing snow out of the way for several hours straight,” Tyson added. “Knowing that you don’t have to work a straight eight hours without a break eases your mind as a crew member.”

Both Hinkle and Tyson agreed that 2021 will be a year of training for the new snow plowing operations, but like the flexibility and safety measures to help keep crews safe and the city streets cleared more effectively. Salt supplies are replenished, and the crew continues to be on alert for any upcoming winter storms that may come. More information about the City’s snow removal policy can also be found on the City’s website: <https://mountvernonohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Snow-policy.pdf> .

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ABOUT THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON:

The City of Mount Vernon is an innovative community with an authentic hometown feel. Home to 17,000 people, Mount Vernon is the county seat for Knox County and boasts historic buildings and districts as well as business and professional, educational, and recreational opportunities through many adaptive reuses of the community’s infrastructure and spaces. Specific attractions are the historic Woodward Opera House, the Knox County Memorial Building and Theater, and the 250-acre Ariel~Foundation Park adjacent to the state scenic Kokosing River. With strong ties to higher education, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College, and Central Ohio Technical College have satellite locations in the historic downtown. Located 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Mount Vernon is near the geographic center of Ohio and has connections all over the globe.

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