2011 Early February Winter Weather Blog - Rio Grande Valley, TX

The following information will be updated **as conditions and staffing permit** through the expected winter weather from Thursday, February 3rd through Friday, February 4th. Reports will include precipitation amounts, road closures, sheltering information and changes, and other items of interest as the situation evolves.

3 PM, February 4th

This is the final entry in our winter weather blog; note the file has been converted to a PDF for easier use.

Power Outage Summary: AEP Texas reported a total of ***52,000*** or more Rio Grande Valley customers remained without power, down from ***63,658*** shortly after 8 AM this morning. Brownsville PUB reported 275 customers without power during the early morning hours. No information was available from Magic Valley Electric Cooperative. A majority of the outages were from outages from the rolling blackouts needed to balance the load on the electrical system.

Photos from Around Town: Here are just a few...

1 PM, February 4th

Road Openings/Treatment Updates (1 PM):

The following roads have opened this morning in Cameron, Jim Hogg & Hidalgo Counties. Note: Many, if not all, of the closed roads listed were expected to be opened by 2 PM.

Cameron County
Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge *NEW*
Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge in Cameron County is open to traffic.

Jim Hogg County
FM 1017
FM 1017 from FM 755 in Starr County to SH 285 in Jim Hogg County is open to traffic.

Hidalgo County

US 83 Expressway ***NEW***
TxDOT is beginning to open the US 83 expressway main lanes from Showers Road east to the Hidalgo/Cameron County Line. The process should take approximately 1 hour.

US 281 Expressway ***NEW***
TxDOT is also opening the US 281 Expressway main lanes from US 281/83 Interchange in Pharr North to SH 186/FM 1017 in San Manuel. The process should take approximately 1 hour.

US 281/83 Interchange ***NEW***
TxDOT is opening the US 281/83 Interchange in Pharr.

Spur 115 (23rd Street)
Spur 115 from FM 1016 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is open to traffic.

SH 336 (10th Street)
SH 336 from FM 1016 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is open to traffic.

The following roads remain closed in the following counties:

Cameron & Willacy Counties
FM 2556 (Solis Road)
FM 2556 north/south underpass at US 83 in La Feria is closed.

Rio Hondo Lift Bridge
Rio Hondo Lift Bridge in Cameron County is closed due to icy conditions.

US 77
US 77 main lanes from the Kenedy/Willacy County Line south to the US 77/83 Interchange in Harlingen is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 77/83 Expressway
US 77/83 main lanes from Harlingen South to Brownsville are closed and will be closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 77/83 Interchange
US 77/83 Interchange is closed in Harlingen. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 83 Expressway
US 83 Expressway main lanes from Harlingen to the Hidalgo/Cameron County Line is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

Hidalgo County
FM 907 (Alamo Road)
FM 907 from Rancho Blanco Road to Dicker Road in Alamo is closed.

Spur 600
Spur 600 overpass at Military Highway in Hidalgo is closed due to icy conditions.

US 281 (Cage Blvd)
US 281 from Pecina Road to Juan Balli Road over the floodway in south Pharr is closed due to icy conditions.

FM 88
FM 88 from Mile 5 to Military Highway over the floodway, south of Weslaco is closed due to icy conditions .

Starr County, Zapata, Jim Hogg & Duval County
Motorists are asked to proceed with caution at the following locations:

US 83 at Arroyo Roma in Roma in Starr County
US 83 at La Minita in Roma in Starr County
FM 650 at Arroyo Los Negros in Roma in Starr County

US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Grande in Zapata County
US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Chiquito in Zapata County
US 83 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County
US 83 at Salado Bridge in Zapata County
US 83 at Dolores Bridge in Zapata County
SH 16 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County

SH 285 at Mesquite Bridge in Jim Hogg County
SH 359 at Railroad Overpass in Realitos in the Laredo District

Noon, February 4th

Watch for Falling Ice! As Temperatures begin to warm above freezing in the Lower RGV, ice was starting to melt. "Ice Daggers" falling from trees, power lines, traffic light extensions, etc. will be common until at least 2 PM. Residents and drivers should remain alert to this condition; injuries may

occur if sharp edges fall on you. Refrain from clearing any ice and let the sun do the work for you. All ice should be melted from trees and power lines by 3 PM at the very latest.

WCM Barry Goldsmith displaying an "ice dagger"; next to a palm tree surrounded by them.

830 AM, February 4th

Skies clearing over Zapata, Jim Hogg and Western Starr counties. The Clearing line continues to move southeast and should clear all areas between Noon and 2 pm.

Power Outages Reported By AEP (8 AM February 4th):

Cameron County - 25,835 customers
Hidalgo County- 32,282 customers
Willacy County- 2,796 customers
Starr County- 2,622 customers
Zapata County- 123 customers

7 AM, February 4th

Road Closures/Treatment Updates:

Cameron County

FM 2556 (Solis Road)

FM 2556 north/south underpass at US 83 in La Feria is closed.

Rio Hondo Lift Bridge

Rio Hondo Lift Bridge in Cameron County is closed due to icy conditions.

Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge

Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge in Cameron County is closed due to icy conditions.

US 77

US 77 main lanes from the Kenedy/Willacy County Line south to the US 77/83 Interchange in Harlingen is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 77/83 Expressway

US 77/83 main lanes from Harlingen South to Brownsville are closed and will be closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 83 Expressway

US 83 Expressway main lanes from Harlingen to the Hidalgo/Cameron County Line is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

Hidalgo County

2nd Street

2nd Street underpass at US 83 in McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.

Main Street

Main Street underpass at US 83 in McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.

Bicentennial Street

Bicentennial Street underpass at US 83 in McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.

Spur 115 (23rd Street)

Spur 115 from FM 1015 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.

SH 336 (10th Street)

SH 336 from FM 1015 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.

Spur 600

Spur 600 overpass at Military Highway in Hidalgo is closed due to icy conditions.

US 281 (Cage Blvd)

US 281 from Pecina Road to Juan Balli Road over the floodway in south Pharr is closed due to icy conditions.

FM 88

FM 88 from Mile 5 to Military Highway over the floodway, south of Weslaco is closed due to icy conditions.

US 83 Expressway

US 83 from Hidalgo/Cameron County Line to Showers Road in Palmview/Penitas area is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 281/83 Interchange

US 281/83 Interchange is closed in Pharr. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.

US 281 Expressway

US 281 from the US 281/83 Interchange in Pharr North to SH 186/FM 1017 in San Manuel is closed. Frontage Roads where available are open.

Jim Hogg County

FM 1017 ***NEW***

FM 1017 from FM 755 in Starr County to SH 285 in Jim Hogg County is closed due to ice.

Starr County, Zapata, Jim Hogg & Duval County

TxDOT is applying fine gravel on the bridges at the following locations. Motorists are asked to proceed with caution:

US 83 at Arroyo Roma in Roma in Starr County

US 83 at La Minita in Roma in Starr County

FM 650 at Arroyo Los Negros in Roma in Starr County

US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Grande in Zapata County

US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Chiquito in Zapata County

US 83 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County

US 83 at Salado Bridge in Zapata County

US 83 at Dolores Bridge in Zapata County

SH 16 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County

SH 285 at Mesquite Bridge in Jim Hogg County

SH 359 at Railroad Overpass in Realitos in the Laredo District

Tips for motorists during icy road conditions:

-Slow down and drive to the appropriate weather condition
-Leave a good distance between you and the driver in front of you.
-Keep up with the weather and road conditions
-For State Road Conditions visit the TxDOT website
http://www.txdot.gov/travel/road_conditions.htm or call 1-800-452-9292.
-Buckle up and Don't drink and drive

Don't move, tamper with or drive around barriers blocking a roadway, ramp or bridge. Penalties range from $200 to $1,000 &/or 2 years in jail. The barriers are there for the safety of the traveling public.

10 PM, February 3rd

Road Closure/Treatment Updates:

Cameron and Willacy Counties-

- Rio Hondo Lift Bridge: Rio Hondo Lift Bridge in Cameron County is closed due to icy conditions.

Hidalgo County-

- Spur 115 (23rd Street): Spur 115 from FM 1015 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.
- SH336 (10th Street): SH 336 from FM 1015 to Dicker Road over the floodway in south McAllen is closed due to icy conditions.
- Spur 600: Spur 600 overpass at Military Highway in Hidalgo is closed due to icy conditions.
- US 281 (Cage Blvd): US 281 from Pecina Road to Juan Balli Road over the floodway in south Pharr is closed due to icy conditions.
- FM88: FM 88 from Mile 5 to Military Highway over the floodway, south of Weslaco is closed due to icy conditions .

Starr, Jim Hogg and Zapata Counties-

TxDOT is applying fine gravel on the bridges at the following locations. Motorists are asked to proceed with caution:

- US 83 at Arroyo Roma in Roma in Starr County
- US 83 at La Minita in Roma in Starr County
- FM 650 at Arroyo Los Negros in Roma in Starr County
- US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Grande in Zapata County
- US 83 at Arroyo Tigre Chiquito in Zapata County
- US 83 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County
- US 83 at Salado Bridge in Zapata County
- US 83 at Dolores Bridge in Zapata County
- SH 285 at Mesquite Bridge in Jim Hogg County
- SH 16 at Veleno Bridge in Zapata County

Weather Reports:

- Freezing rain continues in the Brownsville area. About a quarter of an inch of ice has accumulated on cars parked at the National Weather Service station parking lot. Reports of power outages along sections of Alton Gloor Blvd.
- Steady freezing rain continues to fall in the Weslaco area.
- Freezing rain continues in the Raymondville area. A total of 20 car accidents have been reported tonight due to icy roads.

- Freezing drizzle continues to fall in the Harlingen area. Power outages reported in portions of Harligen and Santa Rosa.

- 25,835 customers

Power outages as reported by AEP:

Cameron County

Hidalgo County- 20,528 customers

Willacy County- 548 customers

Starr County- 4,862 customers

Zapata County- 103 customers

8 PM, February 3rd

Road Closure/Treatment Updates:

Cameron and Willacy Counties-

- Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge: Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge in Cameron County is closed.

Hidalgo County-

- US 83 Expressway: US 83 from Hidalgo/Cameron County Line to Showers Road in Palmview/Penitas area is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- US 281/83 Interchange: US 281/83 Interchange is closed in Pharr. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- US 281 Expressway: US 281 from the US 281/83 Interchange in Pharr North to SH 186/FM 1017 in San Manuel is closed. Frontage Roads where available are open.
- FM 88 closed at floodway north/south in Weslaco.
- FM 493 in Donna closed in floodway north/south.

Weather Reports:

- Ice continues to accumulate between Donna and Weslaco. 17 accidents reported in the area.

- Sleet turning to ice in the Rio Grande City area with freezing rain. Some vehicles stalled on side of the road.
- Freezing rain in the Raymondville area with reports of brownouts impacting half of the city. Ambulance services will be suspended due to frontage roads becoming very icy.
- Freezing rain west of Port Mansfield caused a vehicle to rollover on Highway 186 between Port Mansfield and Raymondville. Preliminary reports of 1 fatality and 1 injury with multiple persons ejected from the vehicle.
- Light sleet beginning to develop in the Hebbronville area.
- Freezing rain causing icing on bridges in the Zapata area. 5 accidents reported in the area. TXDOT sanding bridges in the area.

6 PM, February 3rd

Road Closure/Treatment Updates:

Cameron and Willacy Counties-

- US 77: US 77 main lanes from the Kenedy/Willacy County Line south to the US 77/83 Interchange in Harlingen is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- US 77/83 Expressway: US 77/83 main lanes from Harlingen South to Brownsville are closed and will be closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- US 77/83 Interchange: US 77/83 Interchange is closed in Harlingen. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- US 83 Expressway: US 83 Expressway main lanes from Harlingen to the Hidalgo/Cameron County Line is closed until further notice. Frontage **Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.**

Hidalgo County-

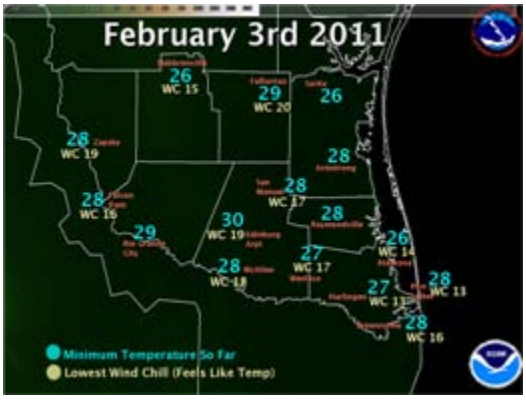
- US 83 Expressway:US 83 from Hidalgo/Cameron County Line West to the Floodway is closed until further notice. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- Sleet and freezing rain continues to develop and beginning to stick to cars and elevated roads and bridges in the McAllen area.
- Moderate freezing rain causing multiple vehicle accidents in the Raymondville area.
- Ice accumulating on Expressway 83 between Donna and Weslaco. One accident has resulted from icy conditions.
- Heavy freezing drizzle occurring at National Weather Service office at Brownsville. Visible ice on vehicles...trees and plants.

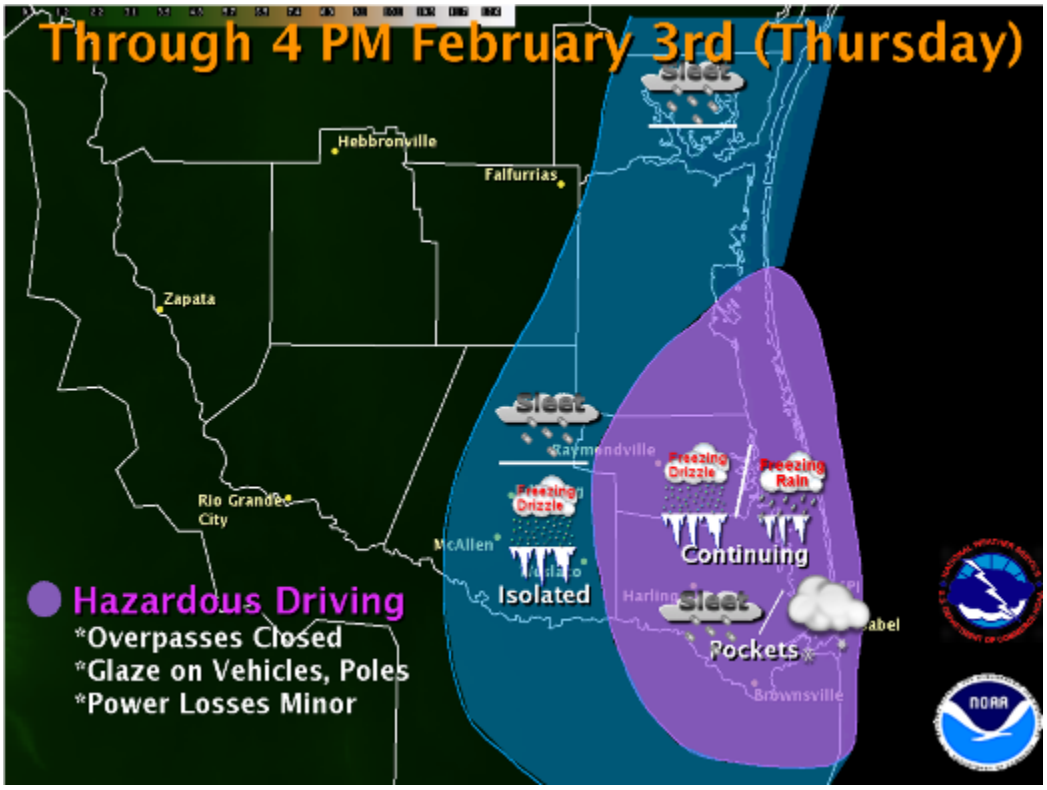
Power outages as reported by AEP:

Cameron County- 16,869 customers
Hidalgo County - 20,528 customers
Willacy County- 548 customers
Starr County- 4,862 customers
Zapata County- 103 customers

3 PM, February 3rd

Story So Far (click images to enlarge):





Weather Reports:

- Icy Elevated roads closed: Brownsville/Olmito: Paredes Line north of Dennet and South of 511; 511 overpasses icy north of Old Port Isabel through Expressway 77 interchange

Road Closure/Treatment Updates:

- Expressways: Highways 77 from Brownsville to Harlingen; the Highway 77/83 interchange in Harlingen, and Highway 83 from Harlingen to the Hidalgo/Cameron County line. **All frontage roads remain open**.
- US 77/83 Interchange is closed in Harlingen. Frontage Roads are open. Motorists should expect slow downs and delays on Frontage Roads.
- Others: Queen Isabella Causeway: Gravel being spread to improve traction.

Noon, February 3rd

Weather Reports:

- Morning - Freezing Drizzle in eastern Cameron County. Light glaze on elevated surfaces, including roads and vehicles.
- Noon - Light snow showers in Harlingen. No accumulation.