

Waushara County Tidbits

Have you managed to avoid running your car into a deer that was crossing the road? Did you avoid that turkey that was flying low over the road? Did you remain calm as the other driver cut you off while changing lanes? If you have avoided these incidents, the next challenge is just around the corner.

I have noticed that snow fence posts are popping out of the ground at strategic locations. I have seen a few flurries in the air despite the balmy temperatures. In my heart I know that once again Central Wisconsin will not avoid winter.

The arrival of winter means that we must adjust our traveling habits. While driving during these last few days of bare roads think about how you will have to adjust when the inevitable snow and ice arrive. A change in your habits now will pay dividends later. It seems that every year some people forget that snow and ice on roads make them slippery. In an attempt to avoid the nasty consequences of going into the ditch or being involved in a crash, you might consider some of these ideas:
Front wheel and four wheel drive vehicles “go” better on slippery roads, but they do not “stop” better. Slow down--less “go” means more “stop”.

Not all roads are plowed, sanded and salted the same. Less traveled roads such as town roads generally won't be plowed until the storm has passed. The intersections and curves may be sanded, but the road surface probably won't be dry and bare until Spring. Even state highways and interstate may become slippery after the storm has past due to blowing snow and refreezing moisture.

Cruise control should not be used when the roads may be slippery. The driver needs to maintain control at all times. Acceleration and braking are especially dangerous on Wisconsin winter roadways.

As always beware of the other vehicles on the road. There is little margin for error when driving and this is even more true during poor road conditions. Don't assume the other driver is in control of his/her vehicle.

Don't tailgate the snow plow truck. You could drive into a “white-out” caused by plow throwing snow into the air. The snow plow truck also occasionally has to stop and back up. Make sure you have allowed enough room so he can do this safely.

Highway bridges, overpasses and ramps can be slippery when the rest of the road is bare and dry.

Stock your car with survival articles in case you become stranded. You might want to consider a cell phone, blanket, winter coat, boots, gloves, flashlight, first aid kit, snack food, window scraper and hand warmers. Remember to make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow and you “crack” the window for fresh air if you run the engine to stay warm.

Receiving a citation for failure to have your vehicle under control or driving too fast for conditions will not make your experience any more pleasant, but it may help you to remember to slow down. Citations will be issued to those drivers that insist upon jeopardizing the safety of other motorists and emergency responders.

Call 1-800-ROADWIS for Wisconsin road condition information. For more information visit www.dot.state.wi.us on the internet.

Leave early—Slow down—Enjoy the snow it only comes only once a year.

Sheriff David Peterson