

Sierra roads horrid, nasty weather not stopping

By Lake Tahoe News

Don't drive. That is the message being delivered by nearly every agency dealing with roads in and around Lake Tahoe.

This was the South Lake Tahoe's message on Jan. 4, "Stay home. If you really don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can. Don't tempt fate: If you don't have somewhere you have to be, watch the snow from indoors."

Caltrans has no estimate when Interstate 80 will open. It's been closed since Wednesday afternoon. Traffic was preventing snow removal teams from being able to clear the road.

Motorists using cable (ladder) chains may be turned around on Highway 267 at the Northstar and Kings Beach chain control checkpoints. Although cable chains are legal traction devices, they've proven to be ineffective when attempting to drive over Brockway Summit during heavy snow storms, according to Caltrans.

All the summits have been having issues because of the wet snow. Not all drivers are prepared or know how to drive in the conditions.

With Kingsbury Grade closed for what could be weeks because of a sink hole, drivers have to go over Luther Pass or Spooner Summit.

It took Amanda Adams 1½ hours to get from Gardnerville to the Y on Wednesday night.

"There are multiple cars stopped on the pass, some are putting on chains in the road, others are parked without anyone inside

the vehicle (maybe they are doing some back country skiing). The road condition isn't horrible, just packed snow with a few areas of deep ruts. But they should have chain control check point in Hope Valley. There were a couple 2WD cars without chains or spinning out trying to go up the road," she posted on *Lake Tahoe News'* Facebook page.

While it was mostly rain in South Lake Tahoe at lake level on Jan. 4, it had been snowing in Incline and there are reports of multiple feet of snow at the top of Kingsbury Grade.

Both state transportation agencies expect the delays to continue as the snow keeps falling.

The National Weather Service in Reno is predicting up to 2 feet of snow for summit passes and continued snowfall for the mountains and at lake level on Thursday. Whiteout conditions may occur.

An atmospheric river is headed toward Tahoe. Flooding is possible in the basin, with Douglas County already issuing a flood alert. The next major storm will arrive Saturday, with the brunt coming Sunday and Monday.

The Weather Service warns, "A flood watch has been issued for the Sierra and western Nevada this weekend. Rising snow levels and the potential to receive 6-12 inches of rain in the Sierra will create serious flooding concerns. If you have interests near creeks, streams, rivers or flood prone areas now is the time to prepare."

Most of the ski resorts are rejoicing about the snow, though some have had rain and avalanche danger is a huge concern.

"This storm has been incredible. Five feet of snow has piled up over the past couple of days, and it's continuing to fall fast this afternoon," said Mike Pierce, director of marketing at Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe, said in a statement. "This system and those forecast to come behind it are setting us up

for an incredible winter season, and one of the snowiest Januarys in years.”