

## **"ORWARN WORKS!!!!!"**

The email from Christine Pavoni of City of Detroit read as follows: "We are in trouble around here... the snow won't stop! Another foot last night, and a few more to come. Marion County is supposed to come to our rescue to remove snow, because the snow plowers have no place to push snow to anymore. I have asked (Marion County) if they could help us with the road up to the water plant. The access road cannot be plowed any longer because the berms have maxed out. We will try to have Marion County go up there while here with a front end loader. However, if it does not get done, would that be something we could turn to ORWARN to for help?"

It had been 50 years since Detroit has seen this magnitude of snow event. The ½ mile road up to their water treatment plant was no long passable...or plowable. The area had no power and the propane-powered emergency generator that was keeping their water treatment plant on line would run out of fuel in a day or so. A propane delivery was vital and they were living on borrowed time.

Marion County was already responding to the area. The County's available resources were fully committed and it would be another day or two before they would be able to assist Detroit. Detroit remembered that it was a member of ORWARN (Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network) and sent the above email to Mike Gotterba, ORWARN Chair.

Coordinating with the City of Detroit, Marion County Emergency Management, and Marion County Public Works, the City of Salem Public Works Department organized an immediate response that included two 4-wheel-drive backhoes, two 10-yard trucks/plows, four operators, and a team leader.

The first day, the backhoe crews reopened a life line to Detroit's water plant. The propane delivery made it in time. The crews were also able to clean out some of the higher elevation narrow streets that plows could not get to. Meanwhile the plows worked hard to open previously unplowed streets. They were able to widen them and make them safer and passable for Detroit citizens who had been unable to get to and from their homes for the last several days.

By the end of the first day, the response had made an immediate impact on the lives of the Detroit citizens and local businesses. This response enabled Marion County, when they arrived on the second day, to get around much easier to various parts of the City to load and haul away vast amounts of snow. Marion County, with their high terrain equipment, was better able to handle areas that Salem could not get to.

A subsequent email from the City of Detroit read: "There aren't words big enough to thank you for the incredibly quick response in our time of need. The Salem crew was just awesome! They went way beyond the call of duty and even showed up an extra day, despite the fact that Detroit presented a real challenge to their equipment! At any rate, we're still in a rather chaotic state as far as organizing issues and workers are concerned, but things are looking up. This is just a quick note to thank Mike, the City of Salem, and all those who have called and offered assistance. ORWARN WORKS!!!!! Thank you, City of Detroit, Christine Pavoni, City Recorder."

ORWARN is an intrastate mutual aid program available to all water and wastewater utilities, public and private, that can be activated with or without a formal disaster declaration. There is no cost to join. The DHS Drinking Water Program, DEQ & Oregon Emergency Management support ORWARN. Are you a member yet? Go to [www.orwarn.org](http://www.orwarn.org) or contact Neil Kennedy at 503-848-3049 or Mike Gotterba at 503-588-6347.