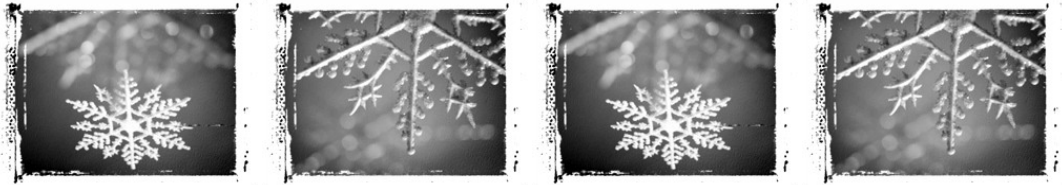




WINTER 2010



# THE SEVEN DEVILS ECHO

## CHRISTMAS DAY ICE STORM 2009

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As most of you have probably heard, many places in the mountains of North Carolina, including Seven Devils, experienced a severe ice storm that began on Christmas Eve and continued into Christmas Day. The storm created multiple problems including treacherous travel conditions, power outages, loss of telephone and cable TV service, and an extremely large number of damaged and fallen trees. Many residences lost power and other services early on Christmas morning and did not have them restored for three to four days.

The damages incurred at Seven Devils are hard to comprehend if you have not been in the Town to observe the damage first hand. People who have lived in the area for fifty or more years stated that the damage is the worst they have ever seen, and according to many people, is much worse than that sustained during the hurricane remnants in 2004 when multiple hurricanes devastated the area. Watauga County and some other counties declared a “state of emergency” on Christmas Day.

### ICY and SNOW COVERED ROADS

The Seven Devils Public Works Department has worked extremely hard to clear the snow and ice from our roads, yet the snow and ice persist. The snowstorm on December 18 and the ice storm on December 25 were the largest in decades. Following these large storms, Seven Devils has experienced several days of continuous snow. Since Christmas Day, only five days have been above 32 degrees and all but one of these was in the thirties. Public Works cleared snow and ice as quickly as possible. However, the snow was up to two feet deep or more in portions of the Town and it fell at a high rate per hour. During the large snow, there was no way to keep up with removal of the snowfall. At the rate the snow was falling, it took ten hours for one of our trucks to make a complete round on all the streets in town. While this situation is behind us now, the resulting snow piled up at intersections and on the sides of roads will be with us for some time since temperatures remain very cold. Snow is piled up along the sides of the roads, including the entrances to driveways. It is impossible for our employees to scrape the roads and not have the snow pile up on the roadsides. We regret that this creates hardships for our citizens, but it is not possible for our Public Works Department employees to clear snow from driveway entrances. This responsibility lies with the homeowner. (continued pg.3)

The Town of Seven Devils has a new website address: [www.sevendevils.net](http://www.sevendevils.net). Please bookmark this address and check it frequently for meeting dates and updated information important to Town residents. If an emergency event should occur, we will attempt to keep our citizens updated at this website with emergency information.

### EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Seven Devils Town Hall                             | 828-963-5343   |
| Town of Seven Devils Public Safety (Police & Fire) | 828-963-6760   |
| Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation         | 828-264-8894   |
| Blue Ridge 24-hour Outage Reporting                | 1-800-448-2383 |
| Skyline Telephone Repair Service                   | 1-877-475-9546 |
| Charter Communications                             | 1-877-728-3814 |



Ice Damage at Seven Devils, NC

## QUARTERLY WATER BILLS

As noted in other articles in this publication, snow and ice have been a way of life since December 18, 2009. Typically, our Public Works Department will read water meters during the last three days of each quarter. Unfortunately, water meters in Town are covered with several inches of snow and ice, and in some cases two or more feet. Consequently, it is impossible to read the meters without locating and digging the

snow and ice from around each of them. With the heavy workload experienced with snow and ice removal and debris removal from the storms, our Public Works staff does not have time to dig out the meters.

Therefore, we have made a decision to bill each account the minimum amount due for the last quarter of 2009. We will read the water meters next in late March. If water usage for the two

quarters exceeds a total of 18,000 gallons, we will adjust and bill the overage on the water bill for the first quarter of 2010. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause our citizens, but it is a necessary measure now.



## NUISANCE ORDINANCE ~ ADDRESSING BEARS AND TRASH

A topic of concern among citizens in Seven Devils has created discussion at several recent Town Council meetings. The concern is the problem of bears and trash cans. The aesthetic problem with this issue centers around the mess the bears make in their quest for food. Litter is scattered about and it seems that bears in Seven Devils do not pick up after themselves. David Hooper from our Planning Board explained the real problem is that the bears are becoming more humanized. This lack of fear among bears for humans could eventually lead to a bear or a person being harmed. It is the contention of the Town of Seven Devils that the absence of adequate measures to keep bears out of a citizen's trash constitutes a public nuisance. Therefore, the Town Council has amended

Article 6.6 of the Nuisance Ordinance as follows: "Fines will be levied in accordance to Article 10 – Enforcement – 10.3 Penalties of the Nuisance Ordinance."

Article 10.3 now states: Upon the first occurrence of trash violation, the owner will be notified by telephone, if possible, and sent a certified letter, return receipt requested. The owner will be given seventy-two hours from the date of notification to remedy. If cleanup is not performed within this time period, the owner will be fined \$50, plus the cost of cleanup. Upon the second offense, the owner will be notified, fined \$100, and given seventy-two hours to cleanup. If it is not cleaned up within the allotted time, the owner will be charged for the cleanup. Upon the third and subsequent offenses, the owner will be

charged \$500 and given seventy-two hours to cleanup. If it is not cleaned up within the allotted time, the owner will be charged for the cleanup.

Every citizen should do everything possible to make certain they do not put their trash at the roadside until the morning of the pickup day. Additionally, citizens should purchase trash containers that are bear proof. The goal is certainly not to impose any penalties. Rather, the goal is to eliminate unsightly trash in our Town and to take measures that discourage the bears from roaming about in Town looking for food.



HOW DO YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE IN A U.S. CENSUS WORKER AND A CON ARTIST?

## 2010 CENSUS TO BEGIN

BY SUSAN JOHNSON

BASIC ADVICE: Be Cautious About Giving Info to Census Workers

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is - how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? BBB offers the following advice:

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

(Continued on page 4)

## CHRISTMAS DAY ICE STORM (CONTINUED)

Employees at Seven Devils have worked as quickly and as diligently as possible throughout the two storms that hit us back to back, and have done so in an excellent manner. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. We will continue to work as quickly as possible to make our streets safe.

### TREES

The tree damage in Town is amazing. Almost every road in town had trees across the road, including Seven Devils Road. Moving about from place to place in Town was very difficult and in some cases, impossible. Our Public Works Department has cleared enough of the trees from the roadways to open a single lane. This included working on Christmas Day from 2:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., and all day on Saturday, December 26. Our employees were totally committed to the task of restoring the transportation routes as quickly as possible. Initially this consisted of opening a single lane on all of the roadways. All roads can be accessed and we are not aware of any houses that cannot be reached because of fallen trees. The Town has hired several crews who began the cleanup process on Saturday, December 26. We expect to have cleanup crews in Town for quite some time. In most cases, the trees are being sawn and run through a chipper, eliminating the need for costly and time-consuming transport of the trees and debris.



Tree damage is also significant in the yards of our citizens. Many houses have limbs on their roofs and debris littering their yards. It is possible that some of the fallen debris could have damaged some houses. We urge our citizens to check or have their property checked for damage. In some cases, property owners may want to contact their insurance companies to see if they have any coverage for tree and debris removal. The tree damage in yards is so significant that the Town will not be in a position to haul off or chip the debris from the property. Please help the Town by attending to your own debris removal.

### ELECTRICITY

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation (BREMCO) worked around the clock to restore electric service. The cold and icy weather conditions and enormity of the job slowed their progress. BREMCO has stated that all power outages of which they are aware have been repaired. However, there could still be houses without power that have not been reported. In cases where the service from the utility pole to the house's meter is damaged, homeowners will need to contact an electrical contractor to have the meter connections repaired before BREMCO can reconnect their service. If any citizen sees power lines that are still unrepaired, and especially lines on the ground, please notify BREMCO immediately with the utility pole number where the problem exists.

### OTHER UTILITIES

Similar conditions exist for both Skyline Telephone Company and Charter Communications. They too have had an extremely large number of repairs and the process is still not complete. Some areas in the Town still have telephone lines and cable TV lines lying in yards. Please treat these as though they are electric power lines if you do not know the difference and consider them live circuits. Exercise caution and call the appropriate companies to report the problems. If you are unsure about the type of wire, please apprise BREMCO and do not take any chances.

### OTHER

As noted above, homeowners are advised to have their properties checked as soon as possible for damages from fallen trees and tree limbs. Town employees have been diligent to notify homeowners of obvious damage, but it is not possible for employees to do a thorough investigation of houses to determine if damages have been sustained. Please inspect your property as soon as possible! In the spirit of "community," please remember your fellow citizens. Many of our citizens need help with tasks such as clearing a driveway entrance, shoveling a sidewalk or deck, and removing tree limbs. If you see damage to a neighbor's house and can contact them, please take the opportunity to do so to help prevent additional damage. If you are unable to contact them, please contact Town Hall at the following number below so that we may attempt to contact them: 828-963-5343.

## Regularly Scheduled Meetings



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### January 2010

Planning Board Meeting - Tuesday, January 19 @ 5:30 PM  
Public Works Committee - Tuesday, January 19 @ 10 AM  
Board of Adjustment Meeting - Monday, January 25 @ 5:30 PM  
Tourism Development Authority - Tuesday, January 26 @ 9 AM  
Public Safety Committee - Tuesday, January 26 @ 5:30 PM

### February 2010

Town Council Meeting - Monday, February 8 @ 5:30 PM  
Planning Board Meeting - Monday, February 15 @ 5:30 PM  
Public Works Committee - Tuesday, February 16 @ 10 AM  
Board of Adjustment Meeting - Monday, February 22 @ 5:30 PM  
Tourism Development Authority - Tuesday, February 23 @ 9 AM  
Public Safety Committee - Tuesday, February 23 @ 5:30 PM

### March 2010

Town Council Meeting - Monday, March 8 @ 5:30 PM  
Planning Board Meeting - Monday, March 15 @ 5:30 PM  
Public Works Committee - Tuesday, March 16 @ 10 AM  
Board of Adjustment Meeting - Monday, March 22 @ 5:30 PM  
Tourism Development Authority - Tuesday, March 23 @ 9 AM  
Public Safety Committee - Tuesday, March 23 @ 5:30 PM

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**WWW.SEVENDEVILS.NET**

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Ed Evans, Town Manager: [townmanager@sevendevils.net](mailto:townmanager@sevendevils.net)

Debbie Powers, Town Finance: [townfinance@sevendevils.net](mailto:townfinance@sevendevils.net)

Phone: 828-963-5343

Fax: 828-963-7418

The Town of Seven Devils administration and the Town Council want to express their appreciation to our Public Works Department for their extraordinary efforts to keep our roads open and as safe as possible during the past few weeks. Our dedicated staff worked erratic schedules – day and night – and many hours of overtime, including both Christmas Day and New Years Day to keep us safe and our homes accessible. Please express your appreciation when you see them out working. With much appreciation, Ed Evans, Town Manager

### 2010 CENSUS TO BEGIN (CONTINUED)

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

**REMEMBER, NO MATTER WHAT THEY ASK, YOU REALLY ONLY NEED TO TELL THEM HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE AT YOUR ADDRESS.**

While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, **YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION.** The Census Bureau will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers, nor will employees solicit donations. Any one asking for that information is NOT with the Census Bureau.

**AND REMEMBER, THE CENSUS BUREAU HAS DECIDED NOT TO WORK WITH ACORN ON GATHERING THIS INFORMATION. No Acorn worker should approach you saying he/she is with the Census Bureau.**

Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person at home. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by email, so be on the lookout for Email scams impersonating the Census.

Never click on a link or open any attachments in an Email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.