

Snow, Ice Clobbers High Country

Written by Steve Frank
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It took awhile for the snow to hit, first being spotted in Avery County around 3pm. By 4, many spots in Watauga had a good snowfall as temperatures approached and dropped to freezing. Then it really hit. Avery reported numerous wrecks, they that spread into Watauga as darkness fell. The Valle Crucis area was nearly closed down, US 321 toward the state line was closed down due to the number of accidents and vehicles that just couldn't go any further in the deep snow and ice. Highway 105 became a joint effort of Avery and Watauga fire departments and law enforcement having to back several tractor trailers down from the top of the mountain to into Foscoe, as they just couldn't make it to the top. US 421 was stopped near the Blue Ridge Parkway bridge, with the State Patrol and firemen turning vehicles without four wheel drive back into Wilkes. Then there were all the trees down, many taking down power lines. BREMCO reported power outages as the storm arrived, and reported several thousand outages at any one time overnight, with crews out in the western parts of Ashe and Watauga, with Avery, Alleghany, Caldwell and Wilkes BREMCO customers experiencing more scattered outages. Schools in Avery and Watauga dismissed before noon yesterday, Ashe defiant, taking in the most school day it could before calling things off for today. And all the school systems are closed in our area this morning. This morning, the issue is ice, frozen rain that fell by the bucketful before the cold weather arrived, and most roads are still in bad shape, parking lots solid sheets of ice. Until the sun works over the surfaces, travel is not recommended. We've got our list of closing and cancellations on line and on the air, so stay tuned or check out GoBlueRidge.net for the latest.