



UPDATED: 30- to 40-car accident causes US-127 closure from Alma to Mt. Pleasant



US 127 is completely shut down from Alma to Mt. Pleasant on Friday, Feb. 21, 2014 after a semi-truck and 30-40 cars collided or went off the road. High winds and blowing snow along with slippery conditions caused many accidents along the express way. (Sun photo by LISA YANICK-JONAITIS/@lisayj_msun)

By **Randi Shaffer**, *The Morning Sun*

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US-127 is shut down from Mt. Pleasant to Alma following multiple car accidents and a serious pile-up involving dozens of vehicles — one of which was a fuel tanker that struck several vehicles.

“Last estimate I heard was there were 30 to 40 cars involved in that,” Marc Griffis, Isabella County Emergency Management Director, said.

Isabella County Sheriff Leo Mioduszewski said that five individuals were taken to the hospital, but nobody experienced life-threatening injuries.

Mioduszewski said poor visibility was likely to blame for the accident in the northbound lane.

“That area is so wide open, snow blows across there,” he said. “I don’t know exactly if a car lost control, or what, but it was kind of a chain reaction.”

In Gratiot later in the afternoon, motorists were advised to take Luce Road north or Alger Road south from M-46, said Gratiot Sheriff Doug Wright. A four car pile up was the result on Alger and a personal injury accident occurred on Luce Road.

Ambulance and fire trucks were sent to Forest Hill and onto U.S. 127 near Begole Road but by mid afternoon there were still no serious injuries.

South of M-46, the U.S. 127 roadway is still open but discussions had taken place about a possible closure there as well, he said.

“Traffic is never ending and it’s treacherous,” said Wright, who along with Undersheriff Earl Hunt was patrolling the roadways.

Extra patrols have been called in, he added.

During the early afternoon, there was a two-hour wait for a tow truck and the warnings started pouring in.

“Police and fire resources are responding to a multi-car accident on the US-127 freeway between M-20 and Shepherd,” Griffis informed residents via a CodeRED emergency notification early afternoon. “You are requested to stay off the freeway and away from this area.”

Cars were instructed to take back roads to and from their destinations if necessary, but were advised to just stay off the roads all together.

Mioduszewski said as of about 2 p.m., there hadn’t been any accidents to cause a back-up on those back roads.

Visibility was near-zero due to blowing snow, and back roads were iced over as traffic tried to detour around the closure throughout the day.

Both south and northbound lanes of US-127 are shut down from M-46 in Alma to the south exit in Mt. Pleasant, and according to CodeRED, the shutdown would likely remain in place for several hours.

Mioduszewski said the Michigan Department of Transportation will make the decision on when to re-open the road.

In Gratiot County, near white-out conditions from strong winds and blowing snow turned some of the roads into “skating rinks,” Gratiot County Sheriff Doug Wright said.

However, there were no serious injuries, he said.

Staff writer Linda Gittleman contributed to this report out of Gratiot County.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Randi Shaffer has been the Isabella County reporter for the Morning Sun since 2012. An alumna of CMU, she is in the process of obtaining her MSA degree. Obsessions include hockey, yoga and vegetables. Reach the author at rshaffer@michigannewspapers.com.

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