

Keeping the Lines of Communication Open

The Dulles Toll Road Experience

Cyndi Ward, Director Dulles Toll Road
Metropolitan Washington Airport's Authority



Keys to Success

- Communication is essential to the process
- Know the key stakeholders
- Who's in charge of what
- Public perception and confidence
 - One message



Background of Dulles Toll Road

- Dulles Toll Road (Virginia Route 267) 8-lane, 14-mile (22.7 km) highway in Northern Virginia.
- The Virginia Department of Transportation transferred the operation of the Toll Road to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority on November 1, 2008.
- The Airports Authority has been the sole operator of the Toll Road since October 1, 2009.
- The Airports Authority's purpose: Financing construction of Metrorail in the Corridor using Toll Road revenue to support the sale of bonds.



Where are we located



- East of the Dulles Toll Road is Washington D. C. — **625,000 citizens**
- West of the Dulles Toll Road is Loudon County — **350,000 citizens**
- Dulles Toll Road is within Fairfax County — **over 1.1 million citizens**



Know the players



Stakeholder who refuses to communicate: Mother Nature



When the Lines of Communication Fail

- Forecast called for a snow event of 2-4 inches to begin around 7 p.m.
 - Previous forecasts never materialized
- Planning conference calls in place
- Each agency had a unified plan
 - Roadways would be treated prior to rush hour
 - Snow removal equipment would be prepositioned before rush hour 5 p.m.



The Real Story

At approximately 3 p.m. a wave of ice/sleet covered the Washington D.C. area

The Washington Post
THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2011

Record U.S. deficit projected this year

CBO forecasts tax cuts will push budget gap to \$1.5 trillion

BY LOUI MONTAGNANO

The still-fragile economy and trob tax cuts approved by Congress last month will drive the federal deficit to nearly \$1.5 trillion this year, the biggest budget gap in U.S. history, congressional budget analysts said Wednesday.

The grim forecast from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office came hours after President Obama called to his White House address for Republicans and Democrats to work together to rein in record deficits and are pushing the national debt into uncharted territory. At \$1.5 trillion, the deficit would equal 9.8 percent of the economy, he CBO said, making it one of the largest by that measure since the end of World War II.

Lawmakers scrambled on Wednesday to respond to the sobering budget picture, with Republicans pressing their call

'Thunder snow' rumbles across area

ALMOST 400,000 WITHOUT POWER

Massive traffic jams lead to area-wide gridlock

BY ANDREW HALEY III

With rumbles of thunder more common to a summer squall, winter descended in force on the Washington region late Wednesday, icing the area down before switching to snow, extending each hour to an agonizing night-long crawl and tearing out the lights for hundreds of thousands as power lines snapped.

Just when the region would get moving again because the question of the hour for public officials still emerging from the hush they took after last year's winter storm.

With snow forecast to continue into the early morning, there were no bold predictions about when residential streets would reopen — or whether routes would still be clogged with cars abandoned during overcast winter commutes that stretched for hours.

"If this was the first big test of the year, we flunked it," said John B. Townsend II, a spokesman for AAA, after he spent two hours

Thunder snow of Arlington gets a little ice with his ice cream as he walks back to work in the District on Wednesday. More photos, 35.



Circumstances

Public did not believe the forecast and timing



The public was caught totally unaware when the storm hit and consequently were unprepared.

Release of federal employees was not mandatory



Subsequent attitude by federal employees was “I am not taking my leave” and employees primarily left between 3-5 p.m. — peak travel time.

Schools did not release students until an hour prior to end of school day



Attitude again was that storm would not materialize. Suddenly an additional influx of people on the roads, including many school age children, increasing hazards.



When the Sun Came Out



Lessons Learned

- Plan for the worst and hope for the best
- Multiple messages provided by too many agencies
- One consistent message
- Reevaluate the plan
- Understanding each others' role and the impact you can have on another agency by your actions



Where Are We Today

- Since January 1, 2013
 - Responded to 17 winter events
 - Total snow accumulation 8 inches
 - Total cost \$749,023
- Preparing for the worst comes at a cost!!



The key to success is...

communication!

Cyndi Ward
Cyndi.Ward@MWAA.com
(540) 226-2021

