

JAN 28

2014

Sunny
High: 62, Low: 46
Forecast: Sunny, 62/46
Friday: Sunny, 60/42
Saturday: Sunny, 60/42
Sunday: Sunny, 60/42

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

FREE ALL-DAY ACCESS ON MYAJC.COM AND TODAY'S PAPER APP

FROZEN IN PLACE

» Hundreds of kids, teachers stranded at schools overnight. » Motorists stuck on icy roadways for hours on end. » Governor declares state of emergency for all 159 counties.

Road to gridlock

► Snow has made overnight commutes with a dash of misery. Commuters in the Atlanta area are stuck in traffic on roads that are icy and slick. Many are stuck in traffic for hours on end. Some are stuck in traffic for days. Some are stuck in traffic for weeks. Some are stuck in traffic for months. Some are stuck in traffic for years. Some are stuck in traffic for life.



Traffic backs up on I-75 as snow blankets the area on Tuesday afternoon. This view was taken from the Skyline Tower in downtown Atlanta.

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Say hello. Don't nod. This morning got through one very long, heavy, frustrating and expensive day (see, right?) for the hundreds of children in metro areas who spent Tuesday night watching all at school. To say nothing of those who spent the night at home. "The Georgia" said Fulton County Sheriff Andrew French. "What a nightmare." So many kids of course that last Tuesday afternoon, it was difficult to even get to work in the metro area. Many kids could not get to school because of an afternoon ice storm that hit the metro area. Many kids were stranded in cars for hours. Many kids were stranded in cars for days. Many kids were stranded in cars for weeks. Many kids were stranded in cars for months. Many kids were stranded in cars for years. Many kids were stranded in cars for life.

Snow, ice lock up traffic as commuters clog roads

The snow is heavy, but many morning commuters were surprised to find that the roads were not as slick as they thought. Many roads are still in the snow, and enough to keep the 1 to 2 inches of ice and snow that has already accumulated on the roads. Commuters are stuck in traffic for hours on end. Some are stuck in traffic for days. Some are stuck in traffic for weeks. Some are stuck in traffic for months. Some are stuck in traffic for years. Some are stuck in traffic for life.



Michelle Crumpton, of Atlanta, commutes on the road on Tuesday morning in the snow.

Snow, traffic take toll

It took more than four hours for one teacher to get home. Many, many, many commuters commuted at Hartsfield Airport. But those compared to a much more serious toll in a car on a congested Interstate. Read their stories. See

THE GREAT DEAL

Can Congress now afford to pass the bill? Only on the TV. Obama v. Romney.

STATE OF THE UNION

Obama vows go-it-alone strategy

President Barack Obama is flanked by Vice President Joe Biden (left) and Speaker of the House John Boehner (right) at a news conference.

Up Close & Personal
New York Times

WASHINGTON After five years of federal job growth, President Barack Obama declared his intent to leave Congress on Tuesday as he outlined a series of federal initiatives on jobs, wages, and retirement and how he will use his executive power to get the economy back on track.

Obama's go-it-alone strategy
A new initiative to create jobs and stimulate the economy.

Our readers
Tuesday's address was a landmark moment for our nation's future. To get the full story, visit ajc.com.

Kroger

CRAZY 8 4-DAY SALE!
Through Saturday, February 1, 2014

- Avocados **88¢** (each)
- Kroger Signature Avocado Oil **88¢** (each)
- Whole360 Free-Range Chicken **\$4.88** (each)

Results of the 2014 Winter Weather Study

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January 28, 2014
Atlanta, GA



The Weather Enterprise

- Emergency managers
- Broadcast meteorologists
- Weather forecasters
- Emergency planners
- Decision makers



The Study

3772 responses to the survey

Weather enterprise interviews





Awareness

- 93% were aware of the winter weather forecast.
 - Primarily through TV news and social media.
- 35% aware at least 48 hours prior.
 - 37% on the 27th
 - 10% on the morning of the 28th
- 80% believed the threat.



NWS Atlanta @NWSAtlanta

Jan 27

Conf increasing for significant snow moving in rush hour Tues. Dont wait to make plans for work/school! #gawx pic.twitter.com/Ox50Rk3rgo



47 RETWEETS

11 FAVORITES



8:35 AM - 27 Jan 2014 - Details

Flag media

Collapse

Reply Delete Favorited More

Reply to @NWSAtlanta



NWS Atlanta @NWSAtlanta

Jan 27

Some indication that middle Georgia could see more sleet than snow Tues night. Stay tuned.

Expand

Reply Delete Favorite More

Seriousness of Threat

- 42% very serious or serious threat.
- Over half somewhat serious or not very serious threat.

Change Behavior

- 76% no change in behavior with forecast
- 68% changed behavior after warnings, advisories, and observed weather



Threat Adjustment

- Jan. 27th: not a very serious event
 - Perceptions changed morning of 28th with changes in forecast, warnings, and onset.



Threat Adjustment

- Wanted to hang onto the forecast from the 27th.
- Upset forecast changed overnight.
- Some understood uncertainty of event.
- Others did not understand or did not want to adjust.
- Thought they would have time to adjust.

Understanding the Warning

Warning-74%

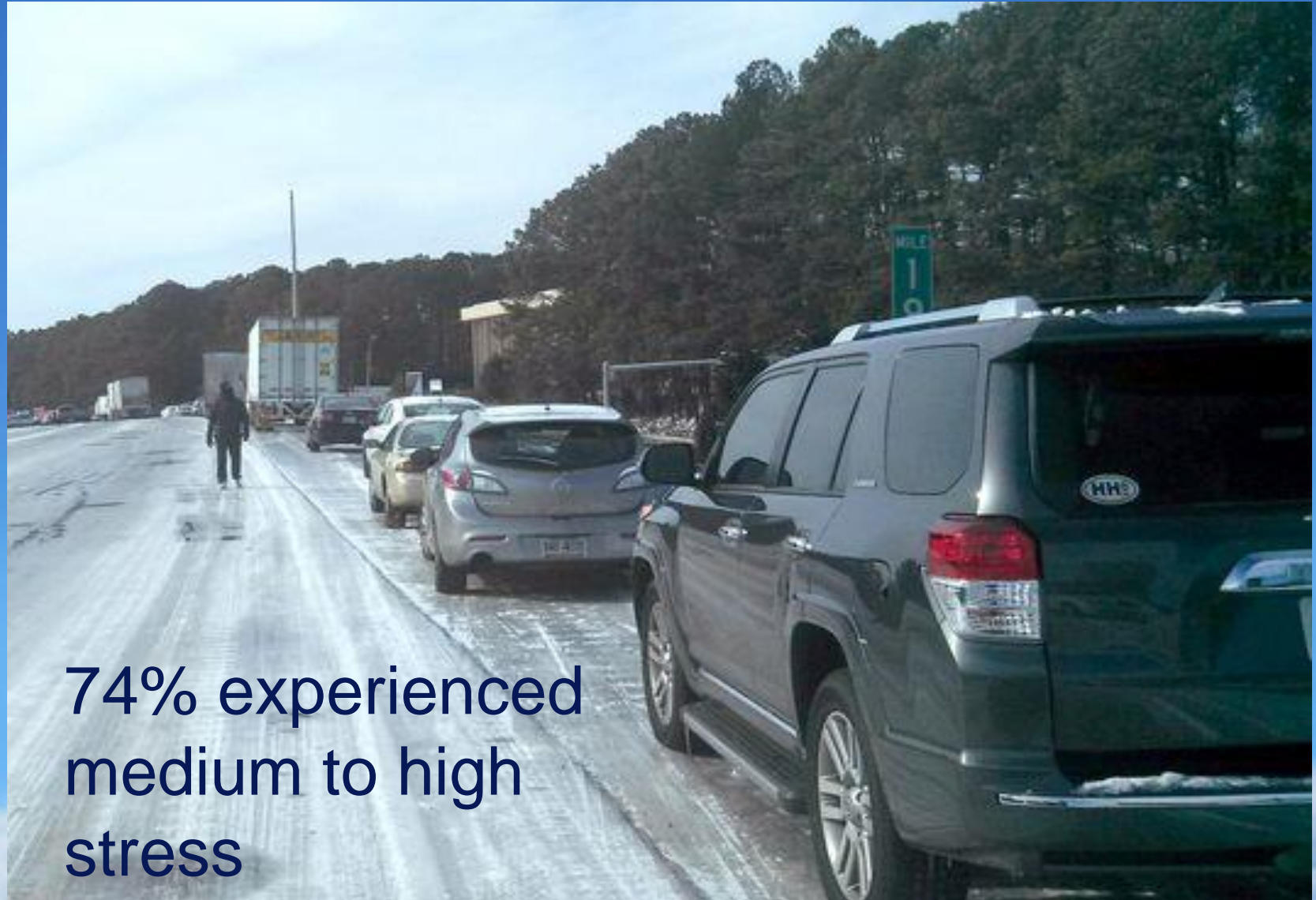
Watch-19%

Advisory-32%

Watch=Advisory-55%



Stress



74% experienced
medium to high
stress

Rescues

- 44% were rescued by friends, family, or good Samaritans.
 - Believed government, first responders, and other emergency people did not do enough to help.
 - Should have...
 - made better closure decisions.
 - done more to clear the roads.
 - 55% got home and 31% got to a friend's home.



WINTER WEATHER ALERT
USE EXTREME CAUTION
WATCH FOR ICY MIX

EXIT 100
Lynchburg Turnpike, VA
Richmond Turnpike, VA
Exit 100A
EXIT 100
Lynchburg Turnpike, VA
Richmond Turnpike, VA
Exit 100A

Children in School

37% had children in school
95% able to get to home or shelter
5% stayed at school overnight



How did the meteorologists do?

- Some people were critical of the NWS, The Weather Channel, and local TV mets.
- A majority were satisfied with...
 - Forecasting.
 - Response to uncertainty.
 - Evolution of the event.
- Clear that evolution of event was documented and addressed very quickly.

Broadcast Mets

- Messaging was critical.
- Consistency as message changed.
 - 57% said it was consistent.
- Keeping people updated.
- Metro was consistent, but much larger area indicated some inconsistency.
- Impacts for Atlanta will be worse than for other places.

Broadcast Mets

- Local channels
- Trying to get people to pay attention early on.
- Enterprise and messaging worked as usual.
- Response was the problem.
- All modes were consistent.
- 2-hour onset
- Focused more on impacts

Impacts



Broadcast Mets

- Schools were the key.
 - Everyone else would have followed.
 - Previously closed for cold.
- Watches, warnings, and advisories: confusion.
 - Warning only thing that has meaning.
- Impacts have more meaning.
- Media focused on impacts.
 - Stay off roads.
 - Too late.....
 - This was not an ice storm

Broadcast Mets

- Public knows about ice impacts.
- Frozen precipitation????
- Schools closing for advisories???
- It was a temperature issue...
- Needed to convey the uncertainty better.
- Timing of onset was the problem.

Broadcast Mets

- Has to be snowing the night before or when they get up for schools to close.
 - They take chances.
 - Claim the media is always wrong.
 - Have to see it to believe it.
- Waited too long.
 - Panic occurred.

Broadcast Mets

- Watches, warnings, and advisories all the same to people...even news people.
 - Not a winter weather culture.
- Enterprise did not analyze threat correctly.
- Advisory was perceived as “backing off.”
- Communication issue.
- Need meteorologist at the state level.
- Need successful communication system.

What could they have done?

- Checklist
 - Communication standards
 - Unambiguous format
 - Conveys the threat
 - Message cannot be mechanical
 - Attach colors
 - Use the word “threat.”
 - 4:30 pm press conferences

Art Versus Science



WINTER WEATHER
ALERT

Art is the solution, not science.

Communication!!!

Need marketers to develop this art.

Impacts!

- Make uncertainty of event more clear?
- More likely to have prepared?
- Take it more seriously?
- Recognize the overnight tendency to go with the last information before bed.
- Focus more on impacts!!!!
- Better risk communication
 - Educate the public
 - Winter weather awareness week

Education!

- Define winter weather terms.
 - What is an advisory?
- Cone of uncertainty????

Weather Enterprise

- Emergency management well informed.
- Differential impacts by county.
- NWS Chat very important in the evolution.
- Social media dissemination.
- Timing issue.
- Prepositioning of assets.
- Transportation disaster.

Businesses and Schools

- Unique situation
- Not familiar with this type of winter weather situation.
- Cold, snow, ice...
- Need impact-based messaging
 - Especially for unique, atypical, and uncertain events.
- Manage transportation better (Trucks).

Businesses and Schools

**Jurisdictions and counties
make their own decisions.**

**Little to no communication
between schools, business,
government...**





Conclusion

- A communication issue.
- A transportation disaster.
- Impact-based messaging.
- Uncertain and atypical situation.
- Not a science problem!
- This event highlighted all of these things and led to numerous changes that were observed in subsequent events.

Contact Information

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