Lake snow, arctic blast spur early school closings

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Old Man Winter is doubling down on the Rochester region in the coming days. The National Weather Service in Buffalo issued a winter weather advisory for Monroe County that is in effect from 1 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday. This is on top of a wind chill warning for area counties — in effect from 6 p.m. Wednesday to 6 p.m. Thursday.

Monroe County residents can expect between 3 to 5 inches of lake effect snow in the most persistent bands, along with winds as high as 40 mph and wind chills as low as minus 25 degrees. The west side of the county will get the brunt of this snowfall, while eastern suburbs may get much less snow accumulation.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a travel ban on tractor-trailers and buses on the Thruway from the Pennsylvania border to Exit 46 in the Rochester area starting at 8 p.m. Tuesday.

The Rochester City School District and several other schools in Monroe County and areas to the west and south announced they are closing Wednesday due to snow.

This will produce a hazardous environment for drivers, according to the Weather Service. Braving that kind of cold for even a short length of time could result in frostbite or less.

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Schools and other agencies are likely to cancel classes and activities if wind chills reach predicted lows on Thursday, when temperatures could be as low as minus 1 degree in the morning hours (not including wind chill.)

The wind chill factor is the combination of air temperature and wind speed, measuring how cold the air feels to exposed skin.

The Buffalo area and counties west of Rochester, including Orleans, Genesee, Niagara and Wyoming, are under a winter storm warning for an impending lake effect storm that could dump up to 10 inches in certain areas and produce “blizzard conditions.”

The Genesee County Sheriff’s Office issued a travel advisory starting at 3 p.m. Tuesday until further notice, according to a police release Tuesday afternoon.

A separate warning was issued for Oswego, Jefferson, Lewis and other counties east of Lake Ontario. Up to 2 feet of snow is possible in locations there, spanning various time frames through Thursday, depending on the specific location.

Several school districts in Genesee, Orleans, Ontario, Livingston and Wyoming counties on Tuesday evening declared closings for both Wednesday and Thursday. Other districts and some Rochester-area parochial and charter schools, announced closings for Wednesday only; some made no announcements.

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