

WINTER DRIVING EMERGENCY KIT: Don't get caught unprepared

by Deputy Eric Franke

Search and Rescue Deputy - Gallatin County Sheriff's Office

As winter approaches, drivers should equip their vehicle with an emergency kit in the event they get stuck on one of Montana's many remote roadways. Whether it's a vehicle accident, a break-down or the storm of the century, travelers may find themselves stranded for a period of time. While this can be scary, it will be more comfortable with the right equipment on hand.

Load a backpack with an extra set of warm clothes, winter boots, a blanket or sleeping bag, high-calorie snacks, a few bottles of water ($\frac{3}{4}$ full so they don't burst if frozen), and hand warmers (for warmth and/or to thaw frozen water). Throw in a deck of cards, a book, or a sketch pad and pencils (if it's too cold a pen may freeze) to help pass the time. It's also good to have a basic first aid kit, flashlight, and a weather radio. Stow extra batteries for the light and radio and if possible, an extra power source for a cell phone. If a person requires regular medications, they should always carry an extra supply. Keep a snow shovel, tow strap, tire chains and a few road flares in the trunk. Always start a trip with a full gas tank and if stranded, run the engine sparingly to conserve fuel. Following these simple tips can help improve a negative situation and help keep drivers and passengers safe and comfortable in an emergency. ■

ARE YOU A LEADER?

by Tara Mastel

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"But I'm not qualified to be a leader!"

is a common response from people who are asked to participate on local boards, youth organizations or committees. However, the University of Kansas Community Center for Health and Wellness defines a community leader as someone who takes responsibility for the well-being and improvement of their communities. This simple definition includes a wide swath of people.

Being a leader does not require a special title or being elected to an office. Community leaders may:

- attend meetings,
- voice opinions and offer solutions,
- volunteer time,
- suggest new projects and take action to meet needs, and/or
- invite others to discuss how to make a difference in the community.

If taking an active role alone in the community sounds too stressful, consider connecting with someone who shares your interest in an issue or project. Ideally, select someone whose skills complement yours. This will help ensure that collaboration leads to progress toward the end goal.

To be a successful leader, always approach people and groups with respect, an open mind and flexibility. You don't need to be perfect. Be open to learning and receiving help from others. Also consider participating in a local leadership program. To learn more about leadership and opportunities, contact your local chamber of commerce or Extension office. ■

