

Plow drivers have a long day at work

Morning came early for Tim Fehrle.

With heavy snow already falling at 4 a.m., Fehrle climbed into his truck at the Washtenaw County Road Commission's garage on Zeeb Road, and headed out to plow his assigned stretch of Jackson Avenue.

Fehrle and the drivers of the Road Commission's other 45 trucks were out to get a jump on a storm expected to dump up to 7 inches in the area today. They start early to do as much plowing as they can before the morning rush snarls their progress.

"I'm afraid this is going to be a long day," he said, turning around at one point on Jackson to see that the lane he cleared less than half an hour ago was once again completely covered in snow.

Operating a 14-ton truck with a belly blade that cuts a 9-foot swath through the snow is an exercise in keeping a level head. He can't control the weather, and he can't control the actions of other drivers on the roads. While traffic was light this morning, possibly because area schools had given students the day off, some mornings aren't always so relaxed. Most drivers recognize the plows are trying to clear their way to work, but some try to swerve around the plows.

"I don't know if they want to challenge you, or push you over," he said. "They always tell you not to make eye contact." Every year, a few inattentive drivers slam into the rear of the plow trucks.

Fehrle steered his plow between the Ann Arbor city limits and Parker Road, paying special attention to busy intersections, making laps around them to scrape the road down to the pavement. Then he plowed some of the many U-turns on Jackson Avenue, his eyes darting around to keep watch on the traffic and avoid having his blade scrape the curb.

As a 10-year veteran of the Road Commission, working heavy machinery on the road maintenance unit, Fehrle, 49, knows his way around Jackson Avenue. While big storms can mean overtime for the plow drivers, Fehrle confesses that he has never been a fan of winter.

Road Commission spokeswoman Val Cooper said Thursday before the storm hit that all of the trucks would be topped off with fuel and filled with salt so they would be ready to go. The Road Commission planned to send its night crew of about a half dozen plow drivers out early Friday, and then the full complement of staff would arrive at 4 a.m. Main roads get plowed first.

By 7:45 a.m., snow totals in the area ranged from 4 inches in Manchester to 3 inches in Ann Arbor, said Cory Behnke, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in White Lake Township. He said the forecast called for 4 to 7 inches of snow by this evening.

If the forecast holds true, Cooper said, "They'll be out from 4 a.m. until about 8 p.m. ... and then up again as early as 5 a.m. Saturday and have another full day."

That means another long day for the plow drivers like Fehrle.

"We'll sleep on Sunday, I guess," he said.

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ND831 sailing boat ride the waves.

Commanders and gunners to explore research training problems and improve shooting accuracy.

Beach arrived unloading.

This is a young and brilliant fighting groups. Birth only seven years to 10 participate in the Military Region, the army major military exercises, four three honors, two first-class collective merit, the Nanjing Military Region party committee has been commended for advanced branch and the grass-roots level building advanced units in 2006 has been as the advanced party organizations. Win the Nanjing Military Region is a shipping unit ND831 boats.

January 2000, the official appointment of ND831 boats. A master new skills, learning new equipment driving an upsurge in the first branch of the leading members vigorously. Xiao-Zhong study marine branch secretary, memorize well the technical parameters, the development and practice driving skills in the oil and gas people smoked in the cabin, branch member, vice captain Li Hu preoccupied groping each pipeline, and is familiar with each component

A few months later, Branch Office members of each vessel as the professional technocrats. They, under the leadership of ND831 boat quickly tamed by the officers and men at the headquarters of the organization s inspection of the professional title of advanced vessels, the captain Xiao-Zhong Military Region were rated advanced individual training , Eastern Scouts .

This year in July, the first Military Region out of the army vessel to participate in the tri-service joint exercises. All eyes are Chouzhao brothers fleet list , the officers and men of burning with impatience ND831 boat, the flying

In this way, recruitment six months before the ND831 boats allowed to participate in exercises, become exercises in the shortest length of service, not only for training at sea river boats.

The maritime exercise in the past 60 days, boat party branches fully shows the combat effectiveness: the most dangerous path, from

July 15 night and went to the assembly area of the boat Gangchu ND831 Wusong mouth, encountered a typhoon. Flutter gust of wind waves will be over, one will lift boat suddenly started beating wildly, he has sternly him. The situation was very critical! Chen Xiao bell captain arrows into the same command platform, through radio rapid order:

Branch of the leading members complement each other, solidarity and cooperation, and quickly adjust course boats, wind speed ahead. After nearly one hour of the life and death struggle, ND831 boat finally sailed out of the waves, continued into.

Middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River golden waterway , the southeast coast of the Gold Coast reputation. ND831 boats in these waters all year round training and performing their duties, the officers and men Bamianlaifeng Ying, Jiang, often taking is not wet shoes. September 2003, attended the exercises ND831 boats return. Day afternoon, in a Hong Kong park along the coast of Fujian, a local boss to find the captain Chen Xiao Zhong, asking them to build people about, with a few boxes to Nanjing, and also produced a pile of 100 notes, sympathy All officers and men of boats. Chen Xiao keen to see a bell, know that this is an act of smuggling. He made false pretences cooperation look to the boss quickly to the goods sent. At the same time, he quietly indicate the side of the

About the Author

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