

**Press Release**  
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***PRESS RELEASE***

**Gulf Breeze, FL (January 24, 2025)**

In response to the unprecedented Winter Storm Enzo, the City of Gulf Breeze activated an emergency response plan designed to address the unique challenges posed by the city's remote island location during extreme weather events with bridge closures.

The City's limited Emergency Operations Center, consisting of the City Manager, emergency responders, and essential Public Works utility employees, worked to manage the storm's impact. The City also mobilized a private contractor under an emergency contract to supplement efforts. The total response cost is estimated at under \$35,000.

**Key Storm Response Efforts:**

- **De-Icing and Snow Removal:** Over 8,000 pounds each of coarse salt and sand treated critical emergency routes, including intersections, the Gulf Breeze Hospital entrance and ambulance bay, and three Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) intersections. The hospital helipad was also treated to accommodate patient transfers from south Santa Rosa County due to bridge closures.

"Gulf Breeze Hospital appreciated the proactive approach from the City of Gulf Breeze. They began plowing and gritting the entrance to the hospital and emergency department early in the day and continued into the evening. This allowed our team members, patients and visitors to safely access our facility."

Julie Cardwell, Senior Vice President Baptist Health Care, Administrator - Gulf Breeze Hospital

"By being prepared for icy conditions, we were able to keep the front of the fire station clear to respond to emergencies and the entrance to the hospital open. This was vital because with the bridges closed, Gulf Breeze Hospital was the only full-service hospital accessible to us." Fire Chief Jim Custred, Gulf Breeze Volunteer Fire Department

- **Medical Emergency Coordination:** With the closure of the Pensacola Bay Bridge and hazardous road conditions, all south-end medical transports were directed to Gulf Breeze Hospital. A nurse navigator system managed minor medical calls, while structure fire calls were addressed as usual.
- **Public Works Response:** Public Works employees responded to major and minor water leaks, including a significant water transmission break on South Sunset. Despite freezing conditions, 24/7 staffing ensured consistent system pressure, and proactive measures, including customer outreach, identified and mitigated frozen pipe issues.

**Incident Management Statistics:**

- **Police Department:** Handled 44 calls for service, including traffic incidents, welfare checks, and medical assists. Pensacola Bay Bridge closures occurred twice during the storm, affecting transportation for a total of 24 hours.
- **Volunteer Fire Department:** Responded to six incidents, including arcing power lines, natural gas leaks, and a car crash caused by black ice.
- **Water Usage and Loss Mitigation:** The City's proactive water loss program enabled real-time monitoring during the storm, identifying system and customer-side leaks quickly. Water usage spikes were contained, returning to normal levels by Friday afternoon.

Normal operations resumed on Friday, January 24, 2025. A comprehensive final storm report will be released on Wednesday, detailing further findings and response measures.

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