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Meteorologist Says 'Stingy' Omsk Mayor to Blame for Winter Weather Surprise

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Omsk was bombarded with heavy snowfall on Monday.

A state meteorological center in Omsk has blamed the mayor's office for the havoc caused by a heavy snowstorm after local authorities refused to pay thousands of dollars a month for weather forecasts.

Omsk, a city in southwestern Siberia, was bombarded with heavy snowfall on Monday, and the onslaught has since continued, bringing parts of the city to a standstill.

Sergei Ivanov, the head of the city's meteorology center, said his paying clients had been "prepared for the unpleasant weather," regional news portal BK55 reported Wednesday.

"Unfortunately, the Omsk administration refused to sign a contract for weather forecasts, so for them the weather always comes as a surprise," he said.

Viktor Gasheyev, the deputy director of the city's department on information policies, said the services Ivanov spoke of would have cost 300,000 rubles ($4,500) a month.

"We receive trustworthy information about bad weather conditions from the Emergency Situations Ministry, and also from Internet resources, and all of this for free. That information in no way differs from what the weather forecasters offer," RIA Novosti's regional publication, RIA Omsk-Inform, reported.

The heavy snowfall in the Siberian city is expected to stop on Saturday, according to online forecaster Gismeteo.ru.

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