



NEWS



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Hikers rescued after avalanche on Mount Baldy Thursday

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: January 26, 2017, 2:09 PM

MOUNT BALDY - A group of hikers were rescued after they were found themselves stuck in an avalanche Thursday afternoon, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and **County Fire Department** personnel responded to the incident, which occurred at the Mount Baldy bowl trail southeast of the Mount Baldy peak, at 12:13 p.m.

Sheriff's officials said the group was hiking up the trail when an avalanche occurred, causing them to slide over 1000 feet down the side of the bowl. As the avalanche subsided, the hikers came to rest in the snow at the 9000-foot level.

Authorities were alerted to the incident after a witness called 911. The hikers also activated their personal GPS devices, Sheriff's officials said.

Due to the remote area and unstable terrain, assistance from Sheriff's aviation units was requested, who were able to quickly pinpoint the hikers in the lower section of the bowl. The Air Rescue 7 team then arrived and initiated a series of hoist rescues.

County Fire officials stated on their official Twitter account that the first hiker, identified as Cody Ayala, 27, of Long Beach, was found in the bowl at 12:51 p.m. A hoist rescue was initiated and Ayala was extracted about an hour later, officials said.

A second hiker, identified as Chris Chung, 32, of Irvine was rescued just before 2:20 p.m. The third hiker was able to hike out with no hoist needed and declined medical treatment, County Fire officials said, while Ayala and Chung were taken by ground ambulance to a local hospital.

Sheriff's officials said Ayala and Chung suffered moderate injuries from the fall. No other injuries were reported from the incident.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170126/woman-injured-after-rollover-crash-on-hwy-18-thursday?start=2>

Avalanche near Mount Baldy leaves 2 hikers injured

Anne Millerbernd and John M. Blodgett, Press Enterprise

Posted: January 26, 2017, 7:00 PM

An avalanche southeast of Mt. Baldy peak Thursday injured two of three people who had been hiking in the area, fire and law enforcement officials say.

The two injured men — Cody Ayala, 27, of Long Beach and Chris Chung, 32, of Irvine — were hoisted to safety by a San Bernardino County sheriff's helicopter crew and driven by ambulance to a local hospital for treatment. One was believed to have suffered a broken arm, San Bernardino County sheriff's spokeswoman Cindy Bachman said.

The third person, who was not identified, hiked out unassisted and declined treatment, according to a **San Bernardino County fire** news release.

Rescuers were called to the Mt. Baldy Bowl area about 12:15 p.m. for a reported avalanche, fire spokesman Eric Sherwin said. Three hikers were reported in the area at the time.

Ayala and Chung reportedly slid about 1,000 feet, according to a sheriff's news release.

In addition to the county fire and sheriff's departments, personnel from Mt. Baldy Volunteer Fire Department, Angeles National Forest and American Medical Response assembled at a command post set up at Cow Canyon Saddle, the fire news release states.

Because of the remote area and reported unstable terrain, two sheriff's helicopters were called in to help with the rescue. One located the victims, while the other was used "to insert rescue personnel and ultimately perform a series of hoist extractions," the fire news release states.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/avalanche-824114-baldy-thursday.html>

Sheriff's Aviation and San Bernardino County Fire perform a hoist Rescue in Mt Baldy

Highland News

Posted: January 27, 2017, 7:45 AM

On January 26th, 2017, Cody Ayala, 27, of Long Beach and Chris Chung, 32, of Irvine were hiking up the Mount Baldy Bowl Trail. As they reached the top of the bowl, an avalanche occurred causing them to slide down the side of the bowl over 1000 feet.

As the avalanche subsided, the victims came to rest in the snow at the 9000-foot level. Both victims suffered moderate injuries as a result of the fall.

A witness called 911 and reported the incident. The victims also activated their personal SPOT emergency alert device.

Sheriff's patrol helicopter 40King2 (Pilot Deputy Jon Roberg and Tactical Flight Officer Deputy Chris Mejia) were dispatched to the location in an attempt to locate the victims. They immediately located the victims in the center of the Baldy Bowl. Due to the circumstances and reports of injury, Air Rescue 307, staffed with Sheriff and Fire personnel were dispatched to assist in rescue efforts.

Air Rescue 307 responded to the location to conduct a hoist rescue. Pilot Corporal Jon Anderson hovered over the location, while Crew Chief Deputy Ed Leon lowered Firefighter Spencer Brumbaugh and Fire Captain Mark Murphy down approximately 85 feet on the hoist. Brumbaugh and Murphy hiked up the steep snow-packed terrain to the victims. Both victims were medically assessed before being placed into rescue harnesses.

Deputy Leon hoisted Ayala into the aircraft, followed by Brumbaugh. They were flown to and dropped off at Cow Canyon Saddle. Leon then hoisted Chung into the aircraft, followed by Fire Captain Murphy. They were flown to Cow Canyon Saddle, and both victims were released to awaiting medical personnel.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/sheriff-s-aviation-and-san-bernardino-county-fire-perform-a/article_96a80cc2-e4a7-11e6-84ce-ef76563df7c2.html

L.V. man accused of causing deadly fire

Daily Press

Posted: January 25, 2017, 10:21 AM



Lynda Cestone died in a structure fire last year. Donald Wayne Jenman, 68, Cestone's husband, was arrested last Friday after the conclusion of a homicide investigation linked him to the crime. Photo courtesy San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

VICTORVILLE - The Lucerne Valley man accused of causing a fire that killed his wife last year made his first appearance in court last Wednesday.

Donald Wayne Jenman, 68, pleaded not guilty to charges of murder in a Victorville courtroom on Wednesday, court records show. Jenman was arrested last Friday after the conclusion of a homicide investigation linked him to the crime.

Sheriff's officials said Jenman's wife, Lynda Cestone, died in a structure fire at the couple's home last year. The cause of the fire was deemed to be suspicious after arson investigators found that a gas supply line had been disconnected.

Investigators also found Cestone had previously suffered a stroke which left her paralyzed and bedridden, but authorities did not disclose any possible motives or further details Wednesday.

Jenman remains in custody at the West Valley Detention Center in lieu of \$1 million bail. His next court appearance is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. this Thursday, court records show.

The blaze occurred on April 16, 2016 at the couple's home in the 9800 block of Mesa Road. **San Bernardino County Fire Department** officials previously said "hoarder conditions" were found in the home at the time of the fire, including several dead cats, according to a previous Daily Press report.

Cestone's body was discovered as firefighters extinguished the blaze. County Fire paramedic Eric Sherwin previously said Cestone used a wheelchair and the hoarding conditions prevented her from exiting in time. Jenman suffered minor burns and was taken to a trauma center for treatment.

The incident remains under investigation, and anyone with information is urged to contact Detective Mike Cleary or Sergeant Greg Myler of the Specialized Investigations Division, Homicide Detail at 909-387-3589. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-782-7463 or online at www.wetip.com.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170125/lv-man-accused-of-causing-deadly-fire>

Residents Suffer Winter Challenges

Heidi Fron, Reporter, Mountain News

Posted: January 26, 2017 10:00 AM



Chains were required for all mountain residents coming back up the mountain, even if they were driving a four-wheel drive vehicle. Cal Trans District 8 Twitter

Search and rescue missions, disabled motorists and closed highways characterized the events of Jan. 18-23, as three separate storms battered the mountain communities.

The Twin Peaks sheriff's station reported that the California Highway Patrol (CHP) was requested to assist an off-duty hospital police officer, his wife and two dogs, who were stuck, without food or water, at 5 p.m. on Jan. 21. They were located on Crab Flats between Green Valley Lake Road and U.S. Forest Service Road 2N54.

At that time, CHP advised the motorist that their units and tow trucks were unable to get to the vehicle. The situation was eventually resolved at 9 p.m.

Another search and rescue mission, reported by the Twin Peaks station, was triggered by a report from a ham radio operator at 7:41 p.m. on Jan. 22. He heard a motorist report being with a juvenile and stuck in the snow one mile east of Crab Flats Campground on Green Valley Lake Road. The sheriff's Media Incident Detail report reflects that the situation was resolved by 6:22 a.m. on Jan. 23.

A third mission was on Jan. 22 at 12:19 p.m. A male subject and four of his friends went off roading in two vehicles, but not for long. They became stuck near Crab Flats on U.S. Forest Service Road 3N16, about one-half mile west of Green Valley Lake Road. They reported that an unrelated truck was also stuck in the same area.

CHP replied that officers would not be able to reach the subjects, and requested search and rescue assistance. **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel from Station 95 arrived in a snowcat and brought the five off-road enthusiasts out of the forest. No report was provided about the third, Cal Trans District 8 Twitter unrelated truck.

Meanwhile, CHP officers were extremely busy trying to keep the roads clear so Cal Trans and county snow plows could do their jobs. "We had the whole gamut of things to handle," Officer Morris reported from the CHP station in Running Springs. "There were disabled motorists without chains, and vehicles with chains stuck because of how heavy the snowfall was. There were locals and there were tourists who were here prior to chains being mandated," Morris said.

“Closing the highways—18, 330 and 38—helped slow people from getting out and about. People could go down the hill, but only residents were allowed to come up the hill,” according to Morris. He added that the landslides on Highway 138 near Highway 173 caused problems up until Jan. 24.

Highway 18 in the Narrows also caused motorists problems as heavy rains caused a rock slide, taking out some of the steel fence barriers.

Morris reported that there were no major accidents, but a couple with minor injuries.

“We have no real numbers for how many accidents there were because if it is a minor accident with no injuries, we go out to facilitate an exchange of information between the parties.” Due to the high number of minor accidents, the CHP officers don’t create paper reports unless someone requests a “counter report” at the CHP office for insurance purposes.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_4d2ae038-e3ee-11e6-9a90-7b04a253e758.html

Series of storms brings snow and rain to High Desert

Terri Hill, Mountaineer Progress

Posted: January 26, 2017

A series of winter storms followed in succession through California Wednesday evening through Monday night. Two colder storms brought snow, and after a brief respite on Saturday, snow and rain besieged the Tri-Community, and the rest of the Southland, for 48 hours.

Homes in Phelan and Pinon Hills became waterfront properties as the roads swelled with rain and became veritable rivers. On Sunday, Phelan Road was flooded intermittently from Interstate 15 (I-15) to SR-138.

Wrightwood residents had anywhere from one to three feet of snow by the time the five-day deluge came to an end. Also on Sunday, L.A. County Sheriff announced an avalanche advisory. Possible avalanche conditions were reportedly worse than those in 2008, when three skiers lost their lives in an avalanche in Mountain High’s backcountry.

Schools in the Snowline District were closed due to inclement weather on Friday, and activities scheduled for Saturday were cancelled. Sunday’s storm lasted through Monday and school was again closed that day and, as water, ice, and snow made residential streets and Highways 2 and 138 impassible. On Tuesday, black ice made travel throughout the area too dangerous, and schools took another snow day for safety. Approximately 70 Pinon Hills residents were without power for nearly 24 hours.

On Monday, chain control sites were staffed by Caltrans employees, who were without the assistance of the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Multiple requests for CHP monitors were met with the response that only three units were on duty from the Victorville Station, and no one was available for enforcement at the three sites.

Residents who managed to leave the High Desert Monday were met with treacherous travel, as snow fell on I-15 from Oak Hills south beyond the SR-138 exit. CHP units stood by, ready to escort traffic, or close the freeway if necessary.

One couple on Sunday learned the “Turn Around, Don’t Drown” slogan the hard way. They tried to navigate

Swarthout Road, near Old Cajon Boulevard in their Ford F150 during the height of the storm and flash flood warnings. Bypassing a "Road Closed" sign, the couple tried to cross rushing water, not realizing how deep the water was, and how swiftly the current was moving. A passerby called 911 and **San Bernardino County Fire** Swift Water Rescue units responded. A raft was deployed and the occupants of the truck were pulled in, one at a time. By the time they were rescued, they had been stuck in the raging water for nearly two hours.

While the snow pack at upper elevations is encouraging, California's Department of Water Resources cites four factors needed to truly end the drought. Four more months of good storms through must materialize. While the rain thus far has certainly helped the water supply in some aquifers, above average snowpack is necessary to replenish reservoirs and the state's water supply. These storms must occur over the mountains, rather than at the coast where the water runs out to the ocean. Temperatures below freezing in the mountains are critical. When warmer storms dominate the season, water is carried to the ocean as runoff. Finally, actual recovery will take time. The state's groundwater aquifers are critically depleted, and it may take more than one good year of snowpack to truly end the drought in Southern California.

<http://mtprogress.net/home/newsjanuary262017.html>

Victorville Man Killed In Friday Morning Crash

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: January 27, 2017



A man died after his vehicle plunged over the side of the 15 Freeway Friday morning. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A Victorville man died after his vehicle plunged off the freeway early Friday morning on January 27, 2017.

The California Highway Patrol responded to the incident just before 3 a.m. and determined the vehicle was traveling northbound on the I-15 Freeway just north of the Stoddard Wells/Bell Mountain exit.

For an unknown reason, the vehicle, a silver Nissan Versa, left the roadway at an undetermined speed and slammed into the wall of the Quarry Road underpass causing the vehicle to flip.

The male driver was pronounced deceased at the scene by firefighters.

San Bernardino County Firefighters from Station 311 responded to the scene and extricated the victim from the vehicle.

Authorities responded to the family residence to notify next of kin just before 6 a.m.

The accident is currently under investigation by the California Highway Patrol Victorville station.

<http://www.vvng.com/victorville-man-killed-friday-morning-crash/>