



Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Jon E. Lopey

305 Butte Street

Yreka, CA 96097

(530) 841-2900 (Dispatch)

News Release

For Immediate Release:

Sheriff's Search & Rescue & Allied Agencies Rescue Mountain Climber

July 2, 2018

On Saturday, June 30, 2018 at about 5:36 a.m., the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) Search and Rescue (SAR) received a report of a climber on Mount Shasta that was injured and in need of assistance at the 11,550 elevation level of Avalanche Gulch. A "Code Red" was activated for other climbers to be on the look-out for the injured and endangered climber while the SCSO's SAR team responded to the scene and activated responders from the United States Forest Service (USFS). USFS Climbing Rangers, SCSO SAR personnel, and requests for the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) were made to locate the injured and endangered climber. CHP Helicopter H-14 responded but was unable to find the climber due to high winds. Assistance was requested through the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) and a California Army National Guard (CARNG) helicopter requested to attempt a rescue. CARNG helicopter "Spartan 155" responded to Mount Shasta to assist with the search.

At about 12:18 p.m., CARNG airmen from Spartan 155 located and rescued the injured climber in vicinity of Lake Helen. The rescued climber was transported to the Old Ski Bowl, where he was picked up by an ambulance and transported to Mercy Mount Shasta Hospital for treatment of his injuries. According to SCSO SAR and USFS Climbing Rangers, the climber was struck by a fallen rock and injured, which rendered him incapable of descending the mountain slope. The climber was identified as Mr. David Backlin, 29, of Nevada City, California.

According to Sheriff Jon Lopey, "We are very pleased Mr. Backlin was rescued and is now receiving the care he needs. This was a successful rescue of an injured, endangered mountain climber by a multi-agency effort, whose collective efforts were instrumental in this rescue operation. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the courageous and resourceful members of the rescue team members, including the SCSO's Search and Rescue Team, led by SCSO SAR Coordinator Deputy Mike Burns, USFS Rescue Climbers, California OES, the CHP's H-14 pilot and observer, and we received another prompt, efficient, pivotal, and exemplary response from the California Army National Guard, most notably the Spartan 155 helicopter crew. Citizen climbers also assisted the injured climber, which was greatly appreciated. This was another life-saving effort by a dedicated group of professionals and volunteers willing to risk their lives for others in need."

This is a good opportunity to remind citizens climbing Mt. Shasta to be well-prepared. This climber was well-prepared during his ascent on Mount Shasta but he was struck by a fallen rock, which is

not uncommon during this time of the year. Climbers should be prepared for adverse conditions and should always wear an approved safety helmet during climbing activities. All climbers should check-in with the local office of the USFS to ensure they obtain permits and safety information, especially if they are ascending above the 10,000 foot level. A Wilderness permit is required (free of charge) for entering the wilderness areas. Summit Passes are required if you climb above 10,000 feet, and are available from participating vendors or from the USFS. Information can also be obtained on-line at www.fs.usda.gov/stnf, or, the USFS can be contacted by calling (530) 926-4511 (Mt. Shasta Ranger Station) or (530) 964-2184 for the McCloud Ranger Station.

Climbers should travel with a companion or in groups, should obtain the proper equipment, clothing, and other supplies that will sustain them should they become stranded on the mountain. Call ahead to check for current conditions. Crampons, ice axe, and again, a safety-rated helmet are a necessity on Avalanche Gulch route and most other routes (equipment can be rented in Mt. Shasta at two stores). Everyone in a climbing party should carry a map and compass, flashlight, extra food, extra warm clothing, sunglasses, sunscreen, pocket knife, matches, a stove and pot for melting snow for water, a first aid kit, a fully charged cell phone and locator beacon. On-line reference materials provided by the USFS provide more details, Summit Pass Fees, and guide services available in the local area. Again, the USFS should be contacted before visiting Mt. Shasta so that you are well-informed of current conditions and requisite requirements and restrictions.