

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office
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Recent Search and Rescue Incidents- Cell Phones a Critical Lifeline but those Rescued otherwise Unprepared

*YCSO deputies and Search and Rescue volunteers have been extremely busy over the last few weeks helping lost and sometimes injured hikers out of various predicaments. **Many involved in these rescues had already increased the risk of problems because they were hiking alone, did not carry adequate supplies, were not familiar with trail locations and topography, and began hiking just before dark.** Fortunately though, they could rely on YCSO deputies and dedicated volunteers to bring them to safety. All were carrying cell phones which provided lifesaving contact with YCSO dispatchers and rescue personnel. Time is always a critical factor in such rescues. Without a working cell phone, these hikers would have likely experienced all night exposure in the desert and risk of serious injury or death.*

These brief rescue overviews are shared in the hope others will not repeat the same mistakes.

April 4, 2014 – Around 9pm, deputies were notified of a lost 58-year-old California man on Cathedral Rock in Village of Oak Creek. The call originated from the man's father in California who reported that his son called and said he was lost without food, water, or any supplies. Additionally, his son's cell phone battery was almost dead. Very smartly, the father told his son to remain stationary and let rescue personnel come to him.

GPS coordinates were obtained from the hiker's cell phone which placed the hiker near the top of Cathedral Rock. The Verde Search and Rescue (Verde SAR) team was called out and hiker's vehicle was located in the Red Rock Crossing parking lot where a base camp was set. Just after midnight on April 5, Verde SAR found the hiker in good condition and very glad to see the professionals. Within the hour, the man was back to his vehicle heading to his hotel in Flagstaff.

April 6, 2014 – At approximately 7 pm, deputies were dispatched to the vicinity of Bell Rock in the Village of Oak Creek regarding a lost hiker identified as a 44-year woman from Grand Canyon, Arizona. She reported being lost and was trying to return to her vehicle before dark. She was out of water, but

wearing adequate clothing and did have a light source. The woman was directed to call 911 which would allow dispatchers to access GPS coordinates. Using this information and under the deputy's direction, she was guided to the correct trail and arrived at the Court House Butte parking area just after 8PM. The deputy met her there, provided water and a ride back to her vehicle.

April 7, 2014 – Deputies were dispatched to Cathedral Rock in the Village of Oak Creek around 6:45 PM regarding two hikers, a husband, 58, and his wife, 57, who were lost. The couple, from Colorado, called in by cell phone. The wife had fallen into some cactus during their attempt to hike out and they could not find the trail, ending up near a cliff's edge. The couple was directed to remain stationary.

The Verde Search and Rescue team was called out as deputies plotted GPS coordinates obtained from the cell phone call. The team obtained a verbal response from the couple around 9 PM as they attempted to reach their location. Just before 9:30 PM, the team made personal contact and was able to escort the couple to base camp arriving at 11:45 PM. Fortunately, no immediate medical attention was required.

Deputies noted the following – The couple was in no way prepared for such a hike. They were out of water, took no food, and wore light clothing and tennis shoes. When rescuers made contact, the female was shaking uncontrollably, her skin was cold and she had a difficult time moving. One of the Verde SAR members provided extra clothing allowing her to warm during the hike back to safety.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website: www.ycsoaz.gov