Injured skier rescued from Paulina Peak

by Cheryl McDermott

Even though an injured skierâ€™s cell phone battery had gone dead, its GPS chip enabled rescuers to target the Bend, Oregon manâ€™s location which led to his eventual rescue from the heavily-forested terrain Tuesday afternoon, deputies reported.

Ian Minsker, 28, was able to call 911 about 11:30 a.m. before his phoneâ€™s battery died, and reported that after being dropped off at the top of Paulina Peak earlier in the morning, he injured his leg and couldnâ€™t go any further. He had skied â€œThe Chutesâ€• north and west off the summit, Deschutes County Cpl. Neil Mackey said.

That call set off a rescue operation that included deputies, Deschutes County Search and Rescue (SAR) members, U.S. Forest Service personnel and the La Pine Fire Department. They converged near 10-Mile Sno-Park, and met with several of Minskerâ€™s friends who offered their help.

Using the GPS feature of Minskerâ€™s dead cell phone, searchers were able to target his location in a steep and heavily-forested area northwest of Paulina Peak. â€œIt initially appeared that because of the terrain and recent heavy snowfall that rescuers would have to ski or snowshoe in to Minskerâ€™s location,â€• Mackey said.

The injured man was found by two of his friends about 3:15 p.m., and he was given a snowmobile ride to a nearby trail where he was met by SAR paramedics. Minsker was taken to Paulina Lake Resort where his condition was assessed, Mackey said, then he was transported to the Sno-Park where he was placed in the care of La Pine Fire personnel.

He was taken to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend with unspecified, but non-life threatening injuries, the corporal reported.

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