

Three motorists get stuck in softening snow

by Cheryl McDermott

Three vehicles became stuck in the softening snow near milepost 20 of Finley Butte Road Saturday afternoon; the first vehicle, then the second vehicle of a good Samaritan who attempted to pull out the stranded woman, then the third -- a responding deputy.

Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies say Tara Smith, 21, of Bend, was driving toward La Pine when her vehicle became stuck in the snow about 3 p.m.. Smith dialed 9-11 on her cell phone, and was prepared to wait for help with her passengers, an adult friend and her 14-month old daughter

Deputies from both Deschutes and Lake County Sheriff's offices were dispatched to her location, said Sgt. Joe Deluca. A Deschutes National Forest law enforcement officer also responded.

Another motorist came upon the scene prior to law enforcement arrival, and when he attempted to pull out the stranded vehicle his own auto became stuck.

According to the sergeant, a responding deputy's vehicle was the third to become stuck.

It took about one hour for all three vehicles to be dug out of the snow, then they backed out of the area.

Sgt. Deluca said that Smith was fairly well prepared for the situation with warm clothing, food, and almost a full tank of gas.

Deputies remind motorists that winter travel on snow-covered roads can become extremely dangerous when the weather warms and packed snow becomes soft. Warm clothing, blankets, food, cell phones, and plenty of gasoline are recommended.

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