

Missing motorists found in Ochoco Mountains

by Cheryl McDermott

Two Prineville residents were found safe and sound Friday evening after they spent the night in the Ochoco Mountains when their vehicle became stuck in a snow drift and had mechanical problems, deputies reported.

Crook County Sheriff's deputies responded to a report of an "overdue" motorist about 10:15 p.m. Thursday, March 15, said Detective Sergeant Travis Jurgens.

Ryan Bertini, 18, and an unidentified juvenile female left the Prineville area about 3:40 p.m. that afternoon to go for a drive "either to the McKay area, or to Upper Falls" and had not returned.

On Friday, search and rescue personnel joined in the search efforts, Jurgens said. Family members located the missing pair on Forest Service Road 2210 just before 7 p.m.

Bertini's vehicle apparently became stuck in a snow drift, the sergeant said. The two stranded motorists walked to a nearby campground and stayed near a campfire that they found burning. The next day they attempted to free the vehicle, but then suffered additional mechanical problems.

Det. Sgt. Jurgens offered safety reminders to residents planning an outing. "Let someone know the route you plan on taking, your destination, when you are leaving, and when you plan to return," he said.

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