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Update-Golden RCMP responds to fatal avalanche at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

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File #2009-477

Updated and corrected details

At approximately 2:23 pm on March 7th, 2009, the Golden RCMP Detachment received a 911 call advising that an avalanche had just occurred in the area of the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort. Simultaneous reports had been received by the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort along with notification being made to the Golden Search and Rescue team.

"The avalanche was determined to have taken place in a Permanent Avalanche Closure Area, that is within the Controlled Recreation Area of the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort. Preliminary witness accounts indicated that the avalanche was human triggered by a group of four skiers."

Additional information reviewed after the first information released, has clarified that only two skiers from the group of four descended while the other two remained at the top of the Permanent Avalanche Closure Area being skied, thus triggering the avalanche. The two males who remained at the top were not injured, while the other two were buried in the avalanche path.

Rescue team members from the Golden Search and Rescue Team, long side with the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort staff located the two buried skier within half an hour of the call being received. Both were unresponsive when located and CPR was immediately administered. The two were airlifted, from the site directly to the Golden District Hospital where they were pronounced deceased. Rescuers reported that the first male was located approximately 70cm below the surface of the avalanche, with the second being found approximately 60cm below the surface. Rescuers confirmed that at least one of the skiers was equipped with a emergency locator beacon.

Once the rescuers had dealt with the initial group, an expanded search of the avalanche path was conducted with the assistance of two avalanche trained search dogs from the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort and a third avalanche trained search dog from the RCMP.

Officials believe that the results of the expanded search utilizing the specially trained canine units, in all accounts indicated that no other skiers were involved or remain outstanding. The Golden RCMP and the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort will be monitoring the situation closely in order to respond to any new information received that would indicate otherwise.

The Golden RCMP is currently in contact with the families of those involved, who request that the community at large and media respect their privacy at this time, in order to assist them in dealing with this most tragic incident. Limited information in regards to the identity of the deceased and survivors is being disseminated at the families requests. The deceased males originate from the Calgary Alberta area and surviving males also from Alberta. The deceased males were 41 years of age and 40 years of age. The two males who remained at the top of the Permanent Avalanche Closure Area were a 36 yr old male accompanied by a 14 yr old male.

At the current time of updated press release March 8th 2009, the Golden RCMP is continuing to assist the Coroners Services with their investigation into the this incident.

For further media inquiries, news agencies are advised that Golden RCMP Staff Sgt Marko Shehovac NCO i/c Golden RCMP, will be available for comment between 2:00pm and 3:00pm Mountain Time at the Golden RCMP located at 902 9th Avenue, Golden BC or at 250-344-2221.

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For
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Released by

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