Rescue Update

Tuesday, 09 December 2008

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Four technicians, stranded on the 2,800-foot peak of Sheratin Mountain, 10 miles west of Kodiak City, were rescued early this (Tuesday) morning. Rescuers arrived with warm clothing, food and shelter and then led the men down the mountain to safety. KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

The four men, technicians constructing the first tower in an island-wide network of high-speed microwave communication relays, included Kodiak Kenai Cable Company Chief Operating Officer Brian Kincaid and three contractors with Belarde (BELL-are-dee) Custom Concrete Company of Kodiak. The men were dropped off with a week of supplies in good weather Sunday to work on the tower. Sunday night, high winds blew away one tent and some of the supplies.

Steve Wielebski (Wheel-eb-ski), president of the all-volunteer Kodiak Island Search and Rescue group, who helped coordinate the rescue effort with Alaska State Troopers, described the rescue operation.

-- (Wielebski
1 40 sec "By
3:30 ... to the parking lot.")

Three of the stranded
individuals were separated from their camp Sunday
night and took shelter on the backside of the mountain in a snow cave. Kodiak Kenai Cable Company president Walt Ebell says Kincaid, the company's Chief Operating Officer, stayed behind. Ebell said he appreciates the efforts of all those involved in the successful rescue operation.

-- (Ebell 1 35 sec "He was in a small tent ... had a very
different result.")

Wielebski
said KISAR gets called into action when the state troopers and the Coast Guard are unable to facilitate a rescue on their own, which was the case Monday due to volatile weather conditions.

-- (Wielebski
2 21 sec
"The troopers organize ... get to do.")

Megan Peters of the Alaska State
Troopers said a variety of factors contributed to the men being stranded on the mountain. Communications with the stranded workers, who had a satellite phone and a VHF radio, was a key to the successful rescue. Peters said the troopers depend on groups like KISAR for rescue operations of this nature.

-- (Peters 1 50 sec "This was a situation where ... know what they're doing.")

Alaska
State Troopers flew the rescuers in a helicopter owned by Maritime Helicopters Inc. to an altitude of 1,400 feet. All four technicians are reported to be safe and in good health, despite the fatigue of the ordeal.

Kodiak Amateur Radio Emergency
Services provided four people

and Squad 12 throughout the rescue. The city fire department provided an ambulance and a rescue squad.

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