



Office of the Summit County Sheriff

Date of Report <u>03/29/2020</u>	Deputy Name <u>Metzger</u>	Sergeant Name <u>Watson</u>
Case Number <u>20-4692</u>	Connecting Case _____	Report Type <u>Avalanche</u>
Date of Incident <u>03/25/2020</u>	Time of Incident <u>1714 Hours</u>	Location <u>West Portal of Eisenhower Tunnel</u>

Narrative

On March 25, 2020 I was dispatched on an Avalanche call near the West Portal of the Eisenhower Tunnel, located at Interstate 70 MM 213, Summit County, Colorado. Summit County 911 Center advised two snowboarders triggered an avalanche and the debris buried the access road above the west portal. At this time there was not believed to be anyone buried.

Summit County Rescue Group Mission Coordinator Dan Burnett and I responded to the scene. On scene we made contact with CDOT employees who advised all CDOT personnel were accounted for and no one was believed to be caught in the avalanche.

We were also advised that an O'bellx avalanche control system was destroyed by the avalanche. The two snowboarders were on the slope above the O'bellx system and triggered the avalanche which destroyed the system as it came down.

I evaluated the scene. I went to the Loop Rd, which is the access road between East and West bound lanes of I-70. The Loop Rd was buried in a large amount of avalanche debris. I would estimate the debris as up to 20 feet deep in some places. The debris on the road was deep enough to have trapped and or completely buried a vehicle.

The Loop Rd is a public roadway and is frequently used by CDOT employees as well as other public vehicles.

On the mountain above the loop road was the avalanche path. Near the top of the path the fracture line of the slide was apparent. The avalanche path is a defined chute and slides regularly. The chute is controlled by CDOT using the O'bellx gas system.

About half way down the slide path you could see the mounting stand for the O'bellx gas system. The exploder was no longer on the mounting stand. The exploder was later found in the avalanche debris.

Photos of the scene were taken and attached to the case.

After looking at the avalanche I contacted the two snowboarders who were involved. They were identified as, Evan Hannibal and Tyler DeWitt. They told me the following information:

Evan and Tyler were planning on skiing one of the chutes above the west side of the Eisenhower Tunnel. They skinned up an adjacent slope to get to the top of the chute they planned to ski. When they got to the top of the chute they observed a small cornice which had developed from a recent wind loading event. They decided to ski cut just above the cornice to test the slope for reactivity. They did not expect

the slope to be very reactive. As they ski cut, a small 6 inch deep slab broke and propagated across the chute. The slab then stepped down to the ground and a large avalanche was the result. Neither party believed any vehicle or people were below them when the avalanche was triggered. After the avalanche was triggered, they made their way down the avalanche debris to the bottom of the slope.

Both Evan and Tyler completed voluntary written witness statements which were attached to the case.

Evan advised [REDACTED] Both Evan and Tyler advised [REDACTED]

After speaking with Evan and Tyler, I met with Ryan Zarter who is an avalanche forecaster with the Colorado Avalanche Information center. Ryan, Dan Burnett and I evaluated all the information we had. Due to [REDACTED] and the risk of additional avalanches in the area we decided not to put any rescuers on the debris to clear the slide path as there was no reason to believe anyone else was involved.

All personnel cleared from the call at this time.

On April 6, 2020 I contacted CAIC Director Ethan Greene and requested a copy of the official report for this incident. Director Greene provided me a copy of the CAIC report and numerous photographs. Director Greene also provided me with a video which was taken by Evan's Go Pro.

I reviewed the Go Pro video. The video starts as the pair is descending down the mountain. Throughout the video there are several comments made about areas of concern. The pair were clearly worried about avalanche conditions. After the avalanche was triggered there were comments made about how they hope there were no people or vehicles on the road. They also makes comments about being in trouble if the cops show up. See the video for full details.

A copy of the CAIC report, photos and video were attached to the case. I also obtained the avalanche forecast from March 25, 2020 which was attached to the case.

On April 6 at about 1145 hours I attempted to contact both Evan and Tyler to issue them both summonses for Reckless endangerment. Neither party answered their phone so I left voicemails requesting contact.

No further information.

End of report.
