



MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER

October 1, 2010

Lost!

No, this isn't a review of that quirky TV series from HBO. Here in Montezuma County (all activities, all weather, all the time) folks are out in the back country every day. And some of them encounter problems.

Who comes to their aid? Search and Rescue.

We are fortunate to have two excellent resources right here on our home turf: United Search and Rescue, and K9 Search and Rescue.

Each team is made up of volunteers, people who spend their own time and money to provide a life-saving service. They don't just enjoy the work; they are passionate about it.

United Search and Rescue (USAR) conducts ground searches when someone is reported missing, overdue or injured. They equip themselves to operate in all weather conditions, and in the wide variety of terrain which encompasses our region. They train "on their own time and their own dime"; when some unfortunate soul needs them, they respond with all the tools needed to locate and extract the victim (often injured) and transport them to safety. They can search on foot, horseback or ATV.

They also perform crime scene grid searches, locate missing dementia patients and could, in a pinch, conduct "urban" search and

rescue: searching damaged or collapsed buildings for victims of a disaster. Search and Rescue teams perform this critical task throughout the world.

K9 Search and Rescue (K9SAR) functions in a similar way, with the added benefit of using tracking dogs. Some of their canine “members” are trained for avalanche rescue, and in locating human remains as well. Like USAR, they pay for their training as well as the care and training of their dogs.

Search and Rescue teams are a “mandated” service by the State of Colorado (the Sheriff’s Office is required to provide for a team) and our Sheriff’s Office provides some equipment and assistance with grants to USAR. K9 SAR is a private non-profit. The bulk of each team’s operating expenses are paid primarily through donations, fund raisers and grants. They do receive some reimbursement through the State Search and Rescue Fund, using fees derived from hunting licenses, back country use permits, and Search and Rescue “cards” which can be purchased at most sporting goods stores. However, don’t think this is a lucrative business. At best, they receive reimbursement for their fuel.

If you are in trouble in the back country, chances are very good you’ll meet some of these amazing people. But don’t wait for that to happen. Watch for Search and Rescue events in the local media. Take the time to stop, thank them for the wonderful service they perform, and if you can, make a donation; I can guarantee that someone’s life will depend on it!

Be Prepared!

Doug