



Feb. 20, 2009
PR# 09-022

AST Conducts Search for Overdue Aircraft near Nome

*******FINAL UPDATE*******

(NOME, Alaska) - On 2/19/09, at approximately 6:23 p.m., Nome AST was contacted by Frontier Hageland Aviation Station manager, Shannon Thrun, and advised of an overdue aircraft. The aircraft was being piloted by Frontier Hageland Pilot Harland Hannon of Nome with five passengers from Brevig Mission, Johnee Seeetot, Stewart Tocktoo, Rosie Ahnangnatoguk, Heidi Graber and Vernon Ozenna. The Aircraft was returning from Brevig Mission. Nome Volunteer Fire Department Search and Rescue dispatched searchers immediately and Alaska State Troopers also responded via snowmahcine. Evergreen Aviation flew their helicopter for an aerial search with a medic and spotter, but deteriorating weather forced the helicopter to return to Nome.

At approximately 8:50 p.m., ground searchers were advised by Dexter resident, David Olsen, that he saw a light on the back side of Newton peak approximately 8 miles north east of Nome. Searchers were guided to the light and located the aircraft, pilot and passengers. All were reported to be in good health with only minor injuries reported. Searchers transported the individuals to the Beam road approximately 1 mile from the crash site to be taken to Norton Sound Hospital via ambulance for medical clearance.

On 2/20/09, Investigation determined that poor weather contributed to the aircraft flying into the ground. No mechanical issues were reported prior to the incident. Alcohol was not involved. All passengers were transported to Norton Sound Hospital. Two individuals were admitted for treatment of injuries sustained in the crash. All searchers returned and no injuries of searchers were reported. Nome Volunteer Fire Department Engine 8 which responded to the area became stuck off the shoulder of the road but was extricated by a bull dozer and loader.

NTSB and the FAA were notified of the crash and investigators are traveling to Nome. Nome Volunteer Fire Department Search and Rescue, Nome Ambulance EMS crew and Norton Sound hospital staff were exceptional and instrumental in a fast and successful resolution to this event.

***Photos can be found at: [Nome Plane Crash Photos on PIO webpage](#)**

NOTE: The reason for the conflicting distances of the aircraft to its proximity to Nome is due to how rescuers tried to reach it. As the crow flies, the aircraft is 5.3 miles away. SAR personnel on snowmachines traveled 8 miles away from Nome to get there. And, for an ambulance, it is a distance of approximately 13 miles from Nome.

*******UPDATE*******

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(NOME, Alaska) - On 2/19/2009 at approximately 8:50 p.m., the overdue aircraft was located approximately 14 miles northeast of Nome. All six people onboard are reportedly alive. Rescuers are transporting the survivors via snowmachine to an ambulance which, in turn, will ferry them to the local hospital for medical evaluations. Investigation into the cause of the crash is ongoing.

Special thanks to Norton Sound Regional Hospital and the Nome Volunteer Fire Department and Search and Rescue personnel. The volunteers were efficient and organized. The response was exceptional.

*******ORIGINAL RELEASE*******

(NOME, Alaska) - The Alaska State Troopers (AST) in Nome is overseeing a search and rescue operation for an overdue aircraft near Nome. The last communication with the overdue aircraft was logged at approximately 6:30 p.m. When communication failed to resume and the aircraft did not land at its destination, it was reported missing to the AST's Nome Post. The last known location for the overdue aircraft was approximately 7.5 miles outside of Nome. An Alaska State Trooper, personnel from the Nome Fire Department and Nome Search and Rescue are conducting an extensive ground search for the overdue aircraft via snowmachine. Another trooper is managing the logistics of the search and rescue. Evergreen is launching its helicopter to assist with the SAR.

It is believed that the overdue aircraft is a Navajo owned by a commercial air carrier. Preliminary reports indicated that a pilot and multiple passengers are on board. The SAR is ongoing.

More information will become available as it is verified and as the situation develops. **Please direct all media inquiries to Megan Peters at 351-3137.**