



May 27, 2015
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SAR Volunteers Participate in Large-scale Training Exercise

(PALMER, Alaska) – Various search and rescue volunteer organizations in Alaska are participating in a large scale training event May 29-31, 2015. Approximately 150 SAR volunteers will gather at the Palmer Fairgrounds to practice their interoperability and hone their skills. The three-day Alaska Wilderness Interagency Search Exercise is sanctioned by the Alaska State Troopers. The media is invited to attend a media availability which will take place on the first day of the training.

Media Availability:

Location: Palmer Fairgrounds

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: 3:00-4:00 pm

Search and Rescue Groups from local organizations around the state are participating, to include volunteers from the Mat-Su, Kodiak, Fairbanks, Homer, Girdwood, Sitka, Juneau, and Anchorage. Resources such as Alaska State Troopers Helo-3, search and rescue K9s and mounted volunteer search and rescue volunteers will be participating in the event. ASARA and the Alaska Incident Management Team Search and Rescue (AIMTSAR) are running the exercise.

"This training will help prepare our SAR teams from across the state to respond to incidents in the most timely and professional way," said Paul Anderson, a member of Alaska Search and Rescue Association (ASARA). "Having trained volunteers gives a missing person the best chance for a successful outcome."

Search and rescue operations are prevalent. During 2014, 376 search and rescue incidents, involving 635 people, were conducted in the State of Alaska. In 2013, 414 search and rescues took place, which involved 700 individuals.

"This mock incident is an amazing opportunity for SAR volunteers from around the state to work together with a full incident management team over multiple operational periods," said Lieutenant Steve Adams, search and rescue coordinator for the Department of Public Safety.

“This exercise is running during the day and night for three days. It adds incredible realism because it is not uncommon for a real-life event to span that type of timeframe. “

This exercise would not be possible without the support of many organizations and individuals, to include Department of Public Safety, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Department of Health and Social Services, Mat-Su Borough, Alaska State Fair Inc., Alaska Railroad, Eklutna Inc., Granite Construction, American Red Cross of Alaska, Salvation Army of Alaska, Era Helicopters and many dedicated civilian volunteers.