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**SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO
GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO**

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 14, 2010

GarCo Sheriff's Office Signs Response Agreement with Search & Rescue Team

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. – On July 6th, Sheriff Lou Vallario, County Commission Chair John Martin and the Garfield County Search and Rescue, Inc. President Mike Alsdorf finalized an agreement outlining specific parameters for the county's premier search and rescue organization. Previously known as Garfield County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue, the specialized outfit will now serve the local area under the title, Garfield County Search and Rescue, Inc. (GSAR) as a stand-alone nonprofit corporation.

The Sheriff's Office and Garfield County Search and Rescue, Inc., will maintain a close working relationship as the Sheriff has the statutory responsibility under Colorado Revised Statute 24-32-2107 to coordinate search and rescue operations within the county. While the Sheriff is responsible for overall coordination, GSAR does and will provide the actual search and rescue services and wilderness safety education to the county's residents and guests.

Garfield County's search and rescue team dates its origin to 1977 and boasts a very diverse group of volunteers including: attorneys, engineers, real estate agents, self-employed business owners, dentists, retail sales personnel, office managers, bus drivers, school teachers, nurses and retired professionals, to name a few. GSAR is an eclectic group from all walks of life, with members bringing various skill sets that are utilized on each and every mission.

Garfield County Search and Rescue, Inc. is an all-volunteer force with 28 active members and six probationary members. Due to Western Colorado's broad range of terrain features—from low desert valleys to rural populated areas to wilderness slopes above the tree line—each GSAR specialist completes a 60+ hour technical course (SARTECH II) plus additional training in land search operations, navigation, basic life support, cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), high/low angle rope rescue, swift water rescue, boat/raft operations, all terrain vehicle (ATV) and snowmobile operations, avalanche rescue and safety, ice rescue, cave rescue, and helicopter rescue and safety.

Last year, GSAR volunteers spent over 2,712 hours in search and rescue operations, often working directly with other SAR teams, local fire and emergency medical services departments, law enforcement, the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Division of Wildlife and State Parks personnel. Not just a reactionary outfit, team members also conducted over 240

hours of public information and training seminars with hunters, hikers, rafters, skiers and others to ensure all were equipped with the latest safety information prior to venturing into the great, and often unforgiving, Colorado outdoors.

With ultimate search and rescue responsibility resting with the Garfield County Sheriff, GSAR members will continue to work closely with the Sheriff's Office through its Emergency Operations Section. The Sheriff's Public Information Officers will continue to be the primary interface between the GSAR team and the media for all related news releases and incident updates.

The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people by utilizing and employing strong morals, good character, untarnished integrity, technical knowledge and fiscal responsibility through professional, ethical and equitable conduct.

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