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SHERIFF LOU VALLARIO
GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 23, 2010

5:30 p.m.

RIVER RESCUE OPERATION SUSPENDED

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. – At approximately 1:00 p.m. this afternoon searchers recovered the body of Javier Martin Morales-Reyes the 18 year old male searchers have been looking for in the Colorado River near Rifle.

Searchers began at 8:00 a.m. this morning joined by 13 members of the Summit County Water Rescue Team using variety of high tech equipment supporting local rescuers in the recover efforts today.

Resources today included 6 Garfield County Search and Rescue Inc. personnel, 13 members of the Summit County Water Rescue Team as well as Garfield and Summit County Sheriff's Office deputies and Victim specialists, Rifle Fire Department and Union Pacific Rail Road.

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July 22, 2010

8:35 p.m.

RIVER RESCUE OPERATION TO CONTINUE FOR SECOND DAY

GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. – at approximately 3:05 p.m. this afternoon, The Garfield County Emergency Communications Center received a call of a male in the Colorado River east of Rifle (mile marker 93 on Highway 6). Four young adults were swimming in the area and -- while swinging on a rope swing -- the male victim impacted the river's surface on his side.

Witnesses believe the victim had the wind knocked out of him when he landed in the water. Bystanders tried to rescue him and bring him to shore; but he began to panic, making it virtually impossible to hold on to him. None of the swimmers were wearing personal floatation devices.

First responders, including law enforcement and firefighting personnel, quickly lined the riverbanks from the spot of the accident downriver to the West Rifle area to visually search for the young man. Garfield County Search and Rescue, Inc., responded both on shore and in the water via two Zodiac watercraft to search the calm pool sections and downriver currents.

At 5:34 p.m. this evening, the rescue mission evolved into a recovery operation. Crews searched until 8:00 p.m. when the operation was suspended for the night. The team will resume activities early tomorrow morning, and a dive team from Summit County is expected to arrive at 8:00 a.m.

Over 15 search and rescue personnel, as well as Garfield County Sheriff's Office deputies and Victim specialists, Rifle Police and Fire Departments, Burning Mountains Fire Department and Colorado State Patrol.

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GARFIELD COUNTY, Colo. – At approximately 3:05 p.m. this Afternoon the Garfield County Emergency Communication Center was advised of a person in the river West of Rifle, Colorado. Garfield County Sheriff's Deputies immediately called out Garfield County Search and Rescue Inc who is currently responding to the scene.

No further information is available at this time. Please direct all inquiries to Tanny McGinnis; Phil Strouse is unavailable at this time and I am on my way to the scene. I will release more information as it becomes available.

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.