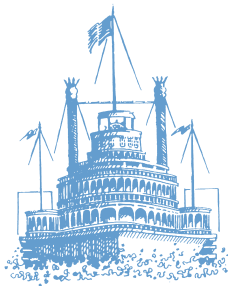


THURSDAY

JANUARY 17, 2008

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO

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STEAMBOAT TODAY

ROUTT COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

FREE



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS



Always smiling

Former Steamboat Springs High School student touched lives, hearts

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COLORADO

Lawmakers want limits

Leach-mining for uranium expected to increase in West

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SPORTS



Twelve dog night

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JOHN F. RUSSELL/STAFF

The sun sets Wednesday behind trees at the top of the Storm Peak lift at Steamboat Ski Area. The Tuesday death of a Pennsylvania man at the ski resort highlights the hidden dangers of unpacked snow surrounding trees — hazardous areas known as “tree wells.”

Hidden dangers

Deep or unstable snow can cause sudden, severe risks

Matt Stensland
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Steamboat Springs snowboarder Dan Tullos knows firsthand how too much powder can quickly create a deadly situation.

About this time last year, Tullos was cruising down the Priest Creek lift line on a powder day at the Steamboat Ski Area when he dropped 15 or 20 feet off a rock, into a gully, carrying

“way too much speed.” “I knew I was kind of (in trouble), so I tried to jump over it ... and pretty much just ended up falling backwards into it,” Tullos, 25, said Wednesday.

He found himself buried under about 2 feet of snow.

“My hands were out, my snowboard was out, but that was about it,” Tullos said.

He was unable to move but could see occasional glimmers of sunlight through his goggles,

On the 'Net

Learn more about tree wells, hazardous snow conditions and safety techniques on the Web at www.tree-welldeepsnowsafety.com

meaning the surface was close.

“Being that close, instinct kicks in and you just try to gasp for air because you know it’s right there, but I couldn’t quite get to it,” Tullos said. “It’s basically like drowning. Even if you

are close to the surface, the snow is so powdery here, it just falls right down in on you, and you can’t unbury yourself.”

Tullos was riding with friends, and they had seen the poof of snow from his fall. After five minutes, Tullos said he began to lose consciousness but could hear the sound of footsteps above.

“I was actually buried enough that they couldn’t unbury me,” he

See **Tree wells**, page 48

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SKI TOWN USA SNOW REPORT

Steamboat Ski Area

New snow — Mid-mountain*	8 in.	Total snow†	240 in.
New snow — Summit	7 in.	Trails open	163/165
Base — Mid-mountain	62 in.	Lifts open	16/18
Base — Summit	76 in.	Conditions	Powder

*24-hour snowfall as of 12:30 p.m. previous day; † total snow beginning Oct. 18 as measured at mid-mountain FOR UP-TO-DATE ROAD CONDITIONS, INCLUDING RABBIT EARS PASS, call 511 or visit: www.cotrip.org



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