

SCR

1

FISCAL NOTE

State of Alaska
2001 Legislative Session

Bill Version: SCR 1
(S) Publish Date: 1/23/01

Revision Date: _____
Title: Avalanche Awareness Month
Sponsor: Senator Green
Requester: Senate Resources Committee

Dept. Affected All
BRU _____
Component _____
Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Personal Services | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Travel | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Contractual | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Supplies | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Equipment | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Land & Structures | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Grants & Claims | 0.0 | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | 0.0 | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CHANGE IN REVENUES [] | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

| FUND SOURCE | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | FY06 | FY07 |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts | 0.0 | | | | | |
| 1003 GF Match | 0.0 | | | | | |
| 1004 GF | 0.0 | | | | | |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts | 0.0 | | | | | |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health | 0.0 | | | | | |
| 1091 Designated Program Receipts | 0.0 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Estimate of any current year (FY00) costs: 0.0

POSITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time | | | | | | |
| Part-time | | | | | | |
| Temporary | | | | | | |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This resolution is anticipated to have no fiscal impact on state agencies.

Prepared by: SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE


SENATOR JOHN TORGERSON, CHAIR

Date: 1-19-01
Phone: 465-2828

Bill History/Action Display



BILL: SCR 1 SHORT TITLE: AVALANCHE AWARENESS MONTH
 BILL VERSION: CSSCR 1(RLS)
 SPONSOR(S): GREEN
 CURRENT STATUS: (H) RES STATUS DATE: 01/26/01
 HEARING: (H) RES Feb 07 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124

TITLE: Relating to Avalanche Awareness Month.

[Full Text](#)

[Fiscal Notes](#)

[Committee Action with Bill History](#)

| Jrn-Date | Jrn-Page | Action |
|----------|----------------------|--|
| 01/16/01 | 0086 | (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 01/16/01 | 0086 | (S) RES |
| 01/23/01 | 0145 | (S) RES RPT 5DP |
| 01/23/01 | 0145 | (S) DP: TORGERSON, TAYLOR, PEARCE, LINCOLN, |
| 01/23/01 | 0145 | (S) ELTON |
| 01/23/01 | 0145 | (S) FN1: ZERO(S.RES) |
| 01/24/01 | 0170 | (S) RLS TO CALENDAR W/CS 1/25 SAME TITLE |
| 01/25/01 | 0170 | (S) FN1: ZERO(S.RES) |
| 01/25/01 | 0175 | (S) READ THE SECOND TIME |
| 01/25/01 | 0175 | (S) RLS CS ADOPTED UNAN CONSENT |
| 01/25/01 | 0175 | (S) PASSED Y20 N- CSSCR 1(RLS) |
| 01/25/01 | 0177 | (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H) |
| 01/26/01 | 0166 | (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 01/26/01 | 0166 | (H) RES |
| 01/26/01 | 0166 | (H) REFERRED TO RESOURCES |

Similar Subject Match or Exact Subject Match

- DISASTER
- PROCLAMATIONS
- PUBLIC SAFETY

Bill Root: [Display Bill Root](#)

**BASIS HAS BEEN RE-PROGRAMMED THIS YEAR
TO REPORT PROBLEMS WITH BASIS INQUIRY**

[Return to Basis Main Menu \(22 Legislature\)](#)
[Return to Legislature Home Page](#)

22-LS0335J
Utermohle
1/31/01

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): SENATOR GREEN

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to Avalanche Awareness Month.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** Alaskans live, work, and play in and on the edge of the wilderness; and

4 **WHEREAS** the abundance and variety of the state's winter recreational opportunities
5 are unmatched in the United States; and

6 **WHEREAS** many of the state's popular winter recreation areas are subject to
7 avalanche danger; and

8 **WHEREAS** some Alaskans are not properly educated or equipped to recognize and
9 respond to avalanches; and

10 **WHEREAS** a number of Alaskans are killed each year by avalanches; and

11 **WHEREAS** education on the recognition of avalanche risks, response to avalanches,
12 and the use of appropriate equipment could reduce avalanche-related fatalities;

13 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
14 governor to proclaim the month of November 2001 as Avalanche Awareness Month; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges schools, community
16 groups, and other public and private agencies and individuals to observe Avalanche

1 Awareness Month with appropriate activities that increase the public's awareness of avalanche
2 dangers, how to respond to avalanches, and the use of appropriate equipment in avalanche
3 areas.

4 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Tony Knowles, Governor; to
5 Aedene Arthur, Backcountry Avalanche Awareness and Response Team; to Doug Fesler and
6 Jill Fredston, co-directors, The Alaska Mountain Safety Center, Inc.; to Bill Glude, Southeast
7 Alaska Avalanche Center; to Colonel Randy Crawford, Director, Division of Alaska State
8 Troopers, Alaska Department of Public Safety; to the mayors, chiefs of police, and fire chiefs
9 of the Municipality of Anchorage, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Haines Borough, City and
10 Borough of Juneau, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, City and
11 Borough of Sitka, City of Cordova, City of Fairbanks, City of Haines, City of Palmer, City of
12 Petersburg, City of Seward, City of Skagway, City of Valdez, and City of Wasilla; to the
13 operators of the ski areas at Eaglecrest, Alyeska, Alpenglow, Hilltop, Cleary Summit, and
14 Cordova Ski Hill; and to legislative communication offices for statewide distribution.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:
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Wasilla, Alaska 99654
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Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
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(907) 465-3805 Fax

SENATOR LYDA GREEN
SENATE DISTRICT N

SPONSOR STATEMENT SCRI

Alaska is avalanche country. Each year Alaskans lose their lives as a result of avalanches. One of the worst years was 1999, when 14 people were killed by avalanches in Alaska. While often little or nothing can be done to prevent the occurrence of an avalanche, much can be done to prevent the loss of life from avalanches.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 would proclaim November 2001 as "Avalanche Awareness Month." This proclamation will raise public awareness of the hazards associated with avalanches, and the opportunities to participate in avalanche safety training at the beginning of the winter recreation season. It is hoped that public participation in avalanche safety programs will be increased and that this increased participation will result in saved lives during the winter.

The need for this resolution was brought to our attention by the Backcountry Avalanche Awareness Response Team (BAART).

SPONSOR
STATEMENT

RECEIVED

JAN 15 2001

Date: January 11, 2001
To: Senator Lyda Green
From: Mat Su Search and Rescue Council

On behalf of the many Alaskans whose lives have been affected by the public awareness and activities that resulted from November 2000 being named as Alaska Avalanche Awareness Month, we would like to thank you for your sponsorship of this item in the Legislature. Although one cannot enumerate the number of injuries and deaths that were prevented because of the publicity and activities connected with the efforts put forth during this month, we know that general public awareness and the attention of public agencies is much greater than it was before. While the death toll from Alaskan avalanches in 1999 numbered fourteen, five lives were lost in 2000 (one being a Cordova resident who was sitting in her living room, one being an Alaska State Employee who was working on clearing avalanche debris from the Seward Highway).

One of the goals of awareness efforts is to educate people about the life-saving necessity of basic avalanche gear (beacon, probe, and shovel). From feedback of companies that sell this gear, as well as discussions with the general public, we know that there are many more backcountry travelers carrying this gear than there has been in the past. For example, as reported in the Anchorage Daily News on January 3, 2001, beacons and shovels were part of a rescue when a skier was buried in an avalanche at Turnagain Pass in the same area where six lives were lost on March 15, 1999. (Please see attached copy of the article) For those of us who have lost loved ones in avalanches who were not successfully recovered while still living, there is some comfort in knowing that education (which includes search and rescue techniques), awareness, and carrying basic avalanche rescue gear is making a difference in other people's lives.

While the November 2000 Avalanche Awareness Month was successful in many ways, we feel we have just begun this important public awareness campaign to help prevent injuries and save Alaskan lives. Thus we would appreciate your support in asking the Legislature to declare November 2001 as Alaska Avalanche Awareness Month.

Thank you again for your support.
Members of the Mat Su Search and Rescue Council

Aedene L. Arthur - contact

SUPPORT
DOCS

Joe Westfall

W JOE WESTFALL CSP / ICCP

CO-FOUNDER:

ALASKA SNOW MACHINE SEARCH RESCUE & RECOVERY TEAM

MEMBER:

ALASKA MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

Shala Westfall ASSRRT.

Patsy Coyne B.A.A.R.T.

Cleve J. Coyne B.A.A.R.T.

Wesley R. Coyne B.A.A.R.T.

Warren Implin Pioneer Ski Patrol - MSB Parks

Bill D'Angelo Mat-Su Motor Mishers

Bill Korman American Red Cross

W. J. Mackroth (Bill Mackroth) Mat-Su EMS

Chris Noake BAART

Don H. Noyes A57

Audini & Arthur BAART



| | | | | | |
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TOP ALASKA STORIES

Rescuers dig out 2nd body

EUREKA: Expert amazed anyone survived huge slide

By Lisa Demer
Anchorage Daily News

(Published February 5, 2001)

The avalanche that killed two snowmachiners Saturday south of Eureka Lodge was a massive slide that measured more than half a mile across where it broke away from the slope, two avalanche experts said Sunday.

Alaska State Troopers on Sunday identified the men killed as Scott Boland, 31, and Danny T. Hunka, 32, both of Anchorage. Searchers found Boland's body about 11:30 a.m. Sunday buried under 10 feet of snow, not far from where his snowmachine was dug out the day before. Hunka's body was found Saturday afternoon.

The two were riding in a group of seven snowmobilers. Another in the group, Richard Hanson, 28, ended up underneath his snowmachine but wasn't buried.

"It was a really big avalanche," said Doug Fesler, an avalanche expert who was at the scene Sunday. He estimated that the base measured three city blocks by three city blocks. Blocks of snow debris were 25 to 40 feet high. "It was really quite amazing that any of those guys survived."

The avalanche occurred near the east fork of the Matanuska River, about 80 miles east of Palmer.

Around noon Saturday, the riders headed up the slope single file. The snow near the top riders broke away under the weight of their machines, said Jill Fredston, an avalanche safety expert who led the search for the missing snowmachiner on Sunday.

"They knew it was a big slide. They were all running to try to get out of it," said Fredston, who runs the Alaska Mountain Safety Center with her husband, Fesler.

The fracture wrapped around the mountain, and Fesler estimated it to be 3,000 feet wide. The slab of hard-packed snow that broke away ranged

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from 18 inches to 15 feet thick and its average depth was 4 to 6 feet, Fesler said.

Underneath the hard pack was a shallow, weak layer of loose, granular snow common in the area. The pack hadn't bonded with the loose snow -- a prime avalanche condition.

The two who died were carried more than 1,000 feet down the slope. At least a couple of those who survived got off their machines and ran up a steep sidewall of the gully, Fredston said. Blocks of snow the size of motorcycles, Subarus and dump trucks tumbled by at about 50 mph, she said.

"These guys are not stupid guys. They are not fools," Fredston said. "They weren't trying to be reckless." Still the area had signs of danger: some natural avalanches and slopes wind-loaded with snow.

Conditions remain ripe for more avalanches, especially on the north end of the Chugach Range, Fredston and Fesler said.

"This instability will be with us until it melts in the springtime or when it comes down through avalanches," Fesler said.

About 70 regular rescue volunteers, plus some of the surviving snowmachiners, gathered at Eureka on Sunday to help, said Dan Hourihan, a state parks ranger who coordinated the base operations from Eureka Lodge for the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group.

Two Army National Guard helicopters ferried volunteers from the lodge. Others traveled the 25 miles by snowmachine in the zero-degree cold.

A trooper helicopter with Fesler and another volunteer aboard crashed around 10 a.m. Sunday near the search site. No one was hurt. Fesler said the flat light at that time of day made it almost impossible to distinguish the ground from the air, and a helicopter float caught the snow as it was trying to land. It flipped hard onto its right side. Fesler then climbed the slope to check for further avalanche danger.

Two search dogs, Chili and Bean, pointed rescuers to the area where Boland's body was found, Fredston said. Volunteers used 12-foot probes to find him.

Reporter Lisa Demer can be reached at ldemer@adn.com or 257-4390.

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Please tell us your thoughts about this topic.

Your name:

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Skier makes it through a wild ride

Anchorage Daily News 1/3/01

■ **RESCUE:** Deadly area remains a lure for outdoor recreationists.

By JON LITTLE
Anchorage Daily News

Rescuers dug a buried skier — bruised, cold but alive — from a snow slide in Turnagain Pass on Monday.

Alaska State Troopers identified the skier as Michael McKinney, 31, of Fairbanks.

"This guy is very, very lucky to have wound up coming out of this thing alive," said Doug Fesler, avalanche hazard consultant for the Alaska Mountain Safety Center.

Monday's slide was 100 to 300 yards wide and carried McKinney perhaps 1,000 feet down the steep slope, where it settled into a 15-foot-deep debris field, Fesler said.

The slide let go about 3 p.m. and ran down the same chute, on the west side of the Seward Highway, where a massive avalanche in March 1999

See Back Page, SLIDE

SLIDE: Fairbanks man survives deadly ride in Turnagain Pass

Continued from A-1

killed six snowmachiners, Fesler said. The place is nicknamed Aaron's Last Run, after Aaron Arthur, one of those victims.

Information about the accident was sketchy Tuesday because McKinney was out and OK by the time troopers arrived at the scene. No official report was filed. But it appears, from eyewitness accounts and the troopers, that McKinney and a buddy, whose name could not be confirmed, had parked their snowmachines and opted to ski and snowboard down the face.

One of the people who found McKinney, snowmachiner

Chris Perez of Anchorage, was atop the ridge at the time.

"They jumped over edge to go and that's when the mountain broke loose. It took the skier with it," he said.

The slide missed McKinney's partner. He told others that he lost sight of McKinney in the white-out blur of the avalanche, then boarded down the slope to find his friend.

Ferez said a child who had watched the slide from below flagged him down — along with his brother Tony and another snowmachiner who had all ridden down to help — and directed him to the avalanche pile.

McKinney and his partner were wearing electronic beacons. His partner had switched his beacon on to locate the missing skier when the others arrived, Perez said. The snowmachiners joined in the search. They spread out in a line and soon heard McKinney's voice rising from the snow.

"He was saying 'Help me God, please save me, somebody find me,'" Perez said. "Just his mouth, was sticking out and his one hand."

The searcher dug him out of the hard, chunky debris with their avalanche shovels. "He was pretty bruised up,

his ribs were bruised and scraped and his face was cut up. He was pretty scared, shaken," Perez said. McKinney was also cold and mildly hypothermic, so they got him into some warm clothes that he'd brought along in his backpack.

The notorious slide chute, a steep tundra slope, starts at 2,700 feet and descends to the 1,000-foot valley. It has a telltale convex bulb at its top, and avalanches such as Monday's frequently begin just below that point, Fesler said.

As dangerous a spot as it is, the ridge is an attractive perch for snowmachiners and skiers.

A snowmachine trail leads up to the top; from there, skiers can plunge into the bowl.

"It's about the most dangerous thing you can do unless you know the stability of the snow," Fesler said. "If you don't, it's purely Russian roulette."

Fesler and troopers said that snowmachiners, snowboarders and skiers may not recognize the avalanche because of the abnormally low snow levels at lower elevations. "That's a huge problem right now, because there is a lot of snow up above 600 feet," said Trooper Sgt. Lee Oly in Girdwood.

Skier makes it through a wild ride

Anchorage Daily News 1/3/01

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See Back Page, SLIDE

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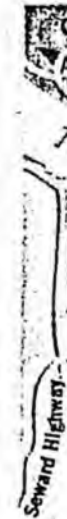
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■ Repr
|little@

Alaska State Legislature

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House Resources Committee

January 12, 2001

To: Suzi Lowell, Chief Clerk
Members House Resources Committee

From: Rep. Drew Scalzi, Co-Chair
Rep. Beverly Masek, Co-Chair

Please notice the following meeting:

Wednesday, February 7th – 1 to 3 PM
Resources Committee Room 124

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DM", is written over the meeting information.

Topic
Bill Hearings:
SCR-1, Avalanche Awareness Month, Senator Green
HJR-7, Urging U.S. Congress to open ANWR, Representative Masek

Please call our office if we may be of any assistance before the meeting.

Thank you.

BM:jj

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Southeast Alaska Avalanche Center

PO Box 22316, Juneau, Alaska 99802

(907)586-5606h & o / -5699 fax & o

e-mail: seakaval@alaska.net

web: www.avalanche.org

an educational nonprofit corporation

January 30, 2001

To whom it may concern,

With the introduction of SCR, the legislature is showing its commendable support of the effort to bring avalanche safety awareness to Alaskans who live, work, and recreate in areas where avalanche danger is high. Avalanches affect many Alaskans, including snowmachiners and other backcountry recreationist, subsistence hunters, highway workers and travelers, and some communities where houses and workplaces are exposed to avalanches. This resolution proclaims November 2001 to be Avalanche Awareness Month and urges schools, community groups, and other public and private agencies and individuals to observe Avalanche Awareness Month. We appreciate this effort and applaud you for taking this important step.

However, in the last paragraph, which states that copies of the resolution shall be sent to several avalanche groups, we feel that Alaskans would be better served by a slightly more inclusive list. There are many areas of state where avalanche danger is high, but it is impractical to include every community in the state. The key communities and recreation areas, though, where avalanches are or have been an issue of particular concern, should be listed. It is our recommendation that copies of the resolution also be sent to the mayors/police/fire chiefs of these areas (who are responsible for rescues) in the hopes they will disseminate this resolution.

Please consider adding these names to the last paragraph of SCR 1: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Valdez, Cordova, Juneau, Ketchikan, Seward, Wasilla, Palmer, Haines, Skagway, Petersburg, and Sitka; also to the ski areas statewide: Eaglecrest, Aiyeska, Alpenglow, Hilltop, Cleary Summit, Cordova Ski Hill; and to the media. Radio/TV/Newspapers.

to legislative process for Statewide distribution

I sincerely appreciate your attention in this matter and hope these names can be added without too much trouble. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

thank you
Bill Glude
Bill Glude
SAAC Director
907-586-5606/-5699

to legislative committees for statewide distribution

Please put into C.S.

- if formal title = necessary use maj/min. Pres Secretary

- sent to legal 1/30/01

Bill Text

**BILL ID: SCR 1**

00 CS FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1 (RLS)
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06 WHEREAS many of the state's popular winter recreation areas are subject to
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08 WHEREAS some Alaskans are not properly educated or equipped to recognize and
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10 WHEREAS a number of Alaskans are killed each year by avalanches; and
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05 Aedene Arthur, Backcountry Avalanche Awareness and Response Team; to Doug Fesler ar
06 Jill Fredston, co-directors, The Alaska Mountain Safety Center, Inc.; to Bill Glude
07 Alaska Avalanche Center; and to Colonel Randy Crawford, Director, Division of Alask
08 Troopers, Alaska Department of Public Safety.

Bill Root: Display Bill Root

**BASIS HAS BEEN RE-PROGRAMMED THIS YEAR
TO REPORT PROBLEMS WITH BASIS INQUIRY**

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[Return to Legislature Home Page](#)

Joe,

Not to be a jerk, but...the resolution requests the Gov to proclaim November 2001 as "Avalanche Awareness Month." He proclaimed November 2000 "Avalanche Awareness Month" (see attached)...a question might be, "did we ask him to do this last year, or did he just do it?" And, "if we didn't pass this resolution, would he do it anyway?"

JL

STATE OF ALASKA



Proclamation by Tony Knowles, Governor

In 1999, 14 lives were lost in avalanches in Alaska and 2 more by early February 2000.

Educators, recreation groups, and concerned citizens are working towards educating Alaskans of all ages on avalanche awareness, safety measures, proper equipment and how to use it, and how to initiate immediate emergency response in avalanche situations.

In order to prevent accidents, people must be taught how to recognize potential hazards and how to make hazard evaluation and route selection decisions based upon data. This has been the emphasis of the Alaska Avalanche School, which during the past 17 years, has conducted over 350 intensive avalanche hazard evaluation and rescue technique workshops, investigated hundreds of avalanche accidents, and been involved in recovering the bodies of more than 20 victims.

November is an optimum time to emphasize awareness and safety, as this is when Alaskans' thoughts turn to winter activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Knowles, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim November 2000 as:

Avalanche Awareness Month

in Alaska, and encourage all citizens who travel in the backcountry to educate themselves on avalanche conditions and dangers. With such a potential for significant injury and death should anyone be caught in an avalanche, proper recognition and rescue skills must be a part of the overall knowledge base we maintain to keep us safe in avalanche prone areas.

DATED: March 20, 2000

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