

SCR

1

FISCAL NOTE

State of Alaska
2001 Legislative Session

BILL NO. SCR 1

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

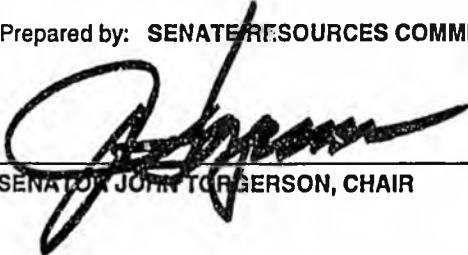
POSITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 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 TOFTERSON, CHAIR

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

AMENDMENT #2

OFFERED IN SENATE RESOURCES

BY Senator Torgerson

TO: SCR 1

Page 2, line 7

Delete: "Major"

Insert: "Colonel"

AMENDMENT #1

OFFERED IN SENATE RESOURCES

BY Senator Torgerson

TO: SCR 1

Page 2, line 4

Following: "sent to"

Insert: "Honorable Tony Knowles,
Governor of the State of Alaska"

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:

600 East Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
(907) 376-3370
(907) 376-5157 Fax

Session:

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-6600
(907) 465-3805 Fax

SENATOR LYDA GREEN SENATE DISTRICT N

SPONSOR STATEMENT SCR1

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 avalanches can be difficult to predict and prevent, education on the dangers of avalanches and the conditions in which they are likely to occur can save lives.

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), an organization formed by families of avalanche victims who are dedicated to preventing future avalanche deaths. BAART is comprised of trained volunteers who provide search and rescue services following slides and who educate the public on avalanche safety.

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

W Joe Westfall

W JOE WESTFALL CSP / ICPP

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 Juppelin Pioneer Ski Patrol - MSB Parks

Will D'Angelo Mat-Su Motor Mishers

Bill Johnson AMERICAN Red CROSS

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

Chris Noakes BAART

Don V. Sawyer AST

Ardene & Arthur BAART

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.

Perez 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 searchers 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.

