

Beeper Leads Patrol to Buried Skier

By George A. Sorensen
Tribune Suburban Editor

ALTA — A cross-country skier was buried under five feet of snow Thursday afternoon when he triggered an **avalanche** on Patsy Marley Hill, east of the Albion Basin ski lifts.

Alta Town Marshal Eric Eliason said the victim was still alive because he was carrying an avalanche beeper. The marshal praised the Alta Ski Patrol, which was able to free the buried skier in 20 minutes.

Ron Gregory, 34, 1627 S. 1000 East, Salt Lake City, was listed in stable condition at Alta View Hospital, where he was taken by ambulance after medical helicopters were unable to reach the scene.

A nursing supervisor said Mr. Gregory is being treated for hypothermia and chest contusions. He is being watched for possible internal injuries.

Marshal Eliason, who was among the first to reach the slide area after it was reported at 1:56 p.m., said Mr. Gregory was buried under five feet of snow when he was located by the beeper he was wearing. He was unconscious when the patrolmen dug him out of the snow.

"It is definite the beeper saved his
See Page B-4, Column 4



—Tribune Photo by George A. Sorensen

Paramedic Ryan Ballard, left, and EMT Darren Judd treat Alta downhill skier

Ron Gregory after a Thursday afternoon **avalanche** buried the man for 20 minutes.

Beeper Helps Alta Patrol Find Skier Buried by Avalanche

Continued From Page B-1

life." Marshal Eliason said.

Depending upon the circumstances, a person has a 50-50 of surviving if he is buried up to 30 minutes. Longer than that, the chances of surviving drops rapidly, the town marshal said.

The beeper emits a signal that can be picked up by searchers and is a "must" for all cross-country skiers, he added.

The ski patrol and volunteers probed the slide, which broke loose at about the 9,600 foot level of the peak, after witnesses said they thought Mr. Gregory was skiing with a companion.

Marshal Eliason said the avalanche was more than 1,000 feet long and 50 to 75 yards wide. Mr. Gregory was carried most of the way down.

A witness said it started with a rumble and developed into a roar as it swept down the steep slopes.

"At first it sounded like they were blasting an avalanche," Amy Kadleck, 20, 4391 Albright Drive, Holladay, a veteran Alta skier and University of Utah ski instructor.

Miss Kadleck was riding up the Albion Lift when she heard the avalanche start.

"It seemed to be over quickly. When the slide went over a cliff, it looked like a waterfall, and as the snow struck the bottom, it sent up a huge white cloud," Miss Kadleck said.

She added that Mr. Gregory's ski tracks indicated he was traversing the slope and had made a second turn when the avalanche broke loose.

"Things were right today for slides. We had several of them, including another skier-started slide in Toledo Basin [north of the parking lots]. He escaped injury and the slide was far enough up the mountainside that it did not pose a threat," Marshal Eliason said.