

# One avalanche victim is lucky, another is not

SALT LAKE CITY (UPI) — A Salt Lake City skier swept away by an avalanche said he had given up and was unconscious when Alta Ski Patrol rescuers found him, thanks to a tiny radio signalling device he was wearing.

"In my wildest dreams I would have never thought of the potential of an avalanche that big," said Ron Gregory, 34, who was carried more than a quarter mile down a mountainside Thursday.

Gregory was released from a hospital Friday, the same day another avalanche near Powder Mountain Ski Resort killed a 39-year-old Ogden,

Utah, man.

"I had time to consciously think about it," Gregory said, as he was being carried down Patsy Marley Mountain, near Alta's main ski area. "If I had hit a tree, I was going to be dead for sure.

"After I realized I couldn't get my hand up by my face, panic kind of set in and I wanted to move so badly, kind of like you want to get to the surface when you're drowning.

"Basically I died," said Gregory. "I didn't do much to save myself. They (the ski patrolmen) are the ones who are the real heroes."

He suffered only cuts and bruises. Rescuers

said they were able to find Gregory within 20 minutes because of the special radio transmitter he was wearing. Patrolmen using receivers to pickup the beeping signal were able to pinpoint the spot where Gregory was buried under five feet of snow.

Friday's avalanche, 40 miles north of Salt Lake City, killed a man skiing in an area posted off-limits due to the slide danger. Charles Beacon was the first Utahn killed by an avalanche during the 1984-85 winter season.

"He was skiing outside the designated resort area, in a no-trespass area," said Weber County Sheriff's Sgt. William Giles.

Giles said Beacon was unconscious when his body was uncovered about 30 minutes after he was buried by the avalanche. He was dead on arrival at an Ogden hospital.

Beacon apparently triggered the slide on a steep mountain about two miles from the ski resort. Giles said another skier had already gone down the hill and led rescuers to the site where they found Beacon, under six feet of snow.

Giles said it is a misdemeanor for skiers to enter posted avalanche areas. But he said the resort would have to decide whether to seek trespass charges against Beacon's companion.