

A Payson man died Friday when he and his snowmobile triggered a massive avalanche near the summit of Mount Nebo, in Utah County. The man and his friend, according to Seth Shaw at the Utah Avalanche Forecast Center, were apparently riding "souped-up" snowmobiles near the 10,000-foot-mark of the 11,877-foot-high mountain. Shaw said the slide was 1200 feet wide and ran 800 vertical feet. The slide averaged 2 feet deep at the crown at left a 12-foot deep debris pile. Shaw noted that the slide occurred in a protected wilderness area where snowmobiles are not allowed. Neither the victim nor his partner had avalanche safety equipment with them. It appears that the victim died from trauma; the slide swept him through trees.

In happier news from last week, a snowmobiler near Big Sky, Mont., was completely buried for as long as 10 minutes after he triggered an avalanche while high-marking a south-facing slope. Both he and all 10 other members of the snowmobiling "party" were wearing avalanche beacons and were able to dig him out, uninjured.