

Western snowstorm draws skiers, but leaves deadly conditions

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A pedestrian makes his way across an icy Willamette Street in Eugene, Oregon, Thursday Jan. 5, 2017, after a snow storm dumped several inches of snow on the area. Skiers throughout the West gleefully flocked to resorts Thursday to take advantage of deep, fresh snow dumped by a series of winter storms that were moving east and threatening turbulent weather across much of the Southeast. (Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard via AP)

Skiers in the West are flocking to the mountains after a powerful storm

dropped a deep layer of snow during a week that has proven to be both joyous and deadly.

At Deer Valley in Utah, Emily Summers said her boss kicked her and her co-workers out of the office Thursday and told them to hit the slopes and take advantage of a winter that only comes once a decade.

"This is the snow we dream of," said Summers, a spokeswoman for the resort.

The storms pounded parts of California, Utah, Colorado and other states as they made their way east, creating difficult driving conditions and closing roads. Small avalanches and white-outs were reported in some areas.

In Sandy, Utah, A.J. Simmons took advantage of his day off Thursday to go sledding with his 2-year-old son for the first time.

His son, Everett, mostly cried as his father pulled his sled slowly down a small hill at a park in frigid temperatures. After one run, Simmons put his son in the warm car with his wife and took a few trips down the hill himself.

Ski resorts in the West used their social media accounts to spread the news of the snow and to lure skiers who have been anxiously waiting to hit the slopes.

But some encountered problems, and the storm proved to be deadly.



Hikers walk up a snowy trail in Chautauqua Park, in Boulder, Colo., Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017. A winter storm dropped several feet of snow in the Colorado high country, and over a foot in Front Range communities. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

A skier was rescued Wednesday after dangling from a Colorado chairlift after his backpack got caught. Luckily, a professional slackliner—a type of tightrope walker known for acrobatic tricks—climbed the lift tower and slid across the cable to reach him.

Mickey Wilson was able to cut the strap, sending the skier falling about 10 feet into the snow below, where a paramedic and ski patrollers waited at the Arapahoe Basin Ski Area. He was taken to a hospital and released.

"Just seeing a person get the life sucked out of them. I kind of stopped thinking and just starting acting," Wilson, who works as a part-time ski

instructor for the resort, told The Denver Post about the rescue that was captured in images posted online.

On Thursday, one of two missing backcountry skiers found in the central Colorado mountains died while he was being treated for hypothermia.

The Lake County Office of Emergency Management posted on its Facebook page that Brett Beasley and a boy he was skiing with were found near Turquoise Lake west of Leadville. The boy, whose name and age have not been released, was uninjured and was taken from the area on a snowmobile to be reunited with his family. Beasley was treated for hypothermia but did not survive.

The two had not been heard from since Wednesday.



Zach Starcer tosses a shovel full of snow to his six-year-old boarder collie, Callie, while clearing the driveway in Pueblo, Colo., Thursday, Jan. 5, 2017 in Pueblo, Colo. Skiers throughout the West gleefully flocked to resorts Thursday to take advantage of deep, fresh snow dumped by a series of winter storms that

were moving east and threatening turbulent weather across much of the Southwest. The storms pounded parts of California, Utah, Colorado and other states as they made their way east. (Bryan Kelsen/The Pueblo Chieftain via AP)

According to The Denver Post, Beasley was a U.S. Forest Service ranger who managed recreation projects for the San Isabel National Forest.

"He was an all-round generous guy. He was a very, very good guy and a friend. Whenever you saw him, it was always fun," Shawn Gillis, one of Beasley's friends, told the newspaper.

The storm also brought heavy snow and strong winds that raised the avalanche danger in much of Colorado's high country. Some passes were shut down so crews could reduce the chance of slides.

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