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MONO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
PRESS RELEASE

Robert Weber
Undersheriff

To: All News Outlets

From: Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer

Date: February 5, 2013

RE: Mono County Sheriff's Office hosts first Certified Snowmobile Training Course

Over the course of the past week, the Mono County Sheriff's Office hosted the first in a series of Snowmobile Operations courses. These training courses are designed to educate new officers in snowmobile use as well as increase the experience level of those already familiar with the snow machines. This course training began in Mammoth Lakes, at the new Search and Rescue building, and continued into field exercises in the Crestview and June Lake areas. Participants from various law enforcement agencies trained for 3-days with professional and experienced instructors. Participants enjoyed the diverse scenery and varied snow conditions Mono County has to offer. This training course is directed toward law enforcement personnel assigned to Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) patrol and/or Search and Rescue responsibilities requiring over the snow travel. The first training course was a success and will be offered intermittently throughout the winter season.

The Mono County Sheriff's Office must have the capability to respond and rescue stranded and injured winter off-road recreational visitors and residents. The California State Parks Off-Highway Vehicle grant program provides grant funding, through the California Off-Highway Vehicle registration fees, to support and ensure deputies have the proper equipment, and fund staff time, to conduct these missions. The Mono County Sheriff's Office currently operates four (4) snowmobiles for off-highway vehicle patrol in the winter to conduct Search and Rescue operations, enforce traffic violations relating to off-highway vehicle use, to prevent wilderness intrusion on the National Forests, and to enforce California Vehicle Code violations.

As the program has progressed from a patrol function to dual response, patrol and search and rescue, the need for training was soon recognized. The uniqueness of the equipment, coupled with extreme weather and terrain, makes training imperative to limit injuries to first responders. This training is needed for personnel safety but also has to be officially recognized in order to ensure the course material is relevant and is being taught in a safe and controlled manner to novice students. The California Peace Officer's Standards and Training (P.O.S.T) approved Mono County Sheriff's Office to be certified to provide training of this kind.

The Mono County Sheriff's Office is proud to be the first law enforcement agency in California to offer this P.O.S.T certified Snowmobile Operator's course and have had a successful first round of training.

Written and prepared by Jennifer Hansen, Public Information Officer