

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Four snowmobilers with ties to Imperial became more familiar with the Snowy Range mountains in Wyoming than they had planned last weekend.

What started as an adventure in snowmobiling last Friday morning turned into a 34-hour ordeal that left their families shaken but relieved when the adventure was over.

Orville J. Green, Dan Terryberry and Luke Tyerman of Imperial and Grant Erker, formerly of Imperial and now of Colorado, took their snowmobiles to Albany, Wyo., last Thursday, and took a short ride.

After spending the night at the Albany Lodge, they “took off for an adventure” Friday morning, according to Green.

The men were familiar with the area and trails. “We’d been on all the trails before, but this was a different spot,” Green said, as the trail wandered through two mountains in the area west of the Snowy Range ski area.

Green said the snowmobilers drove “down a mountain we couldn’t get out of very well. It was too steep.”

They decided to try to follow a river that ran out of the two mountains, but “We ran out of time and gas,” Green said.

It was midnight, they couldn't see well, and with two snowmobiles with hardly any gas and two with "a little bit left," they decided to stay where they were and save the gas for daylight travel.

There was no cell phone service, so the men couldn't call for help.

"We always carry food enough to survive a day or two," Green said, such as water, deer jerky and candy bars. Green also had a lighter so the men could build a fire.

He termed the weather "perfect," with no snow or wind, and temperatures in the 15 to 20 degree range.

Saturday morning Erker's GPS system showed a trail at the top of one of the mountains. The men drove their snowmobiles to within a mile of the trail, then could go no further.

The four began hiking the mile to the trail, taking turns breaking the deep snow. Green said that was a steep climb, too.

They then hiked about four miles down the trail to a spot where Erker's phone received service, and called the Albany Lodge to inform someone of their location, which was about 20 miles from the lodge.

Green said Dan Reeves and Ben Brophy of Imperial, along with several other people, drove snowmobiles to where the four were waiting, and returned them to the Albany Lodge about 9 p.m. Saturday night.

"We ate and got settled down, and called everybody back here," Green said Tuesday.

They found out that Reeves had informed authorities and the families in Imperial that the four

hadn't arrived at his cabin Friday night as they were supposed to.

An Albany County Search and Rescue team, operating in shifts, had been searching for the four Saturday. The team leader had also been keeping in contact with the families in Imperial.

"We weren't in any trouble," Green said. "We were warm and had things to nourish us."

He added that one thing they probably shouldn't have done was drink out of the river, because the water was "a little dirty."

"To me it was an adventure. Some of the other guys didn't like it as much," he said.

Asked if he would go snowmobiling again, Green said sure. And they will, because their snowmobiles are right where they left them, about a mile from that trail.

"All we got to do is take some gas back and continue on our adventure," he concluded.