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BREAKING: El Paso hiker lost in the Black Range during blizzard (3:27 p.m.)

By Christine Steele/Sun-News Bureau Chief

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A 67-year-old man from El Paso never returned from a hike in Emery Pass in the Black Range on Saturday and search and rescue volunteers have been searching for him throughout the night as a blizzard rages on.

The man apparently went for a day hike on Saturday afternoon and was expected to return Saturday night said Brian Fuller, a volunteer with Grant County Search and Rescue who returned from participating in the search this morning.

Search and Rescue got the call at about 1 p.m. on Sunday, Fuller said, and began heading out to the area off to start the search. By Sunday evening, enough snow had fallen that Highway 152 was shut down.

Incident Commander Dave Kuthe said during the night while it was snowing, volunteers from Grant County Search and Rescue, Organ Mountain Technical Rescue and Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue covered 20 miles of trail searching for the man.

"It was a real challenge and will continue to be so," he said.

Additional resource were on their way to help participate in the search Monday afternoon, Kuthe said, including 13 National Guardsman from

Albuquerque, search and rescue teams from Alamagordo and Ruidoso, and two Borstar teams with dogs from the U.S. Border Patrol. They will be extending the search area during this second operational period, Kuthe said.

The man, who is described as in good shape, was hiking with his Black Lab, Zulu, Kuthe said, and has hiked in that area before. The man's son-in-law, who also lives in El Paso, reported him missing and has been in touch with search and rescue volunteers.

Kuthe said the man's vehicle was found but was locked and rescuers were trying to get a scent item to give the dogs on the search but didn't know how well that work in the weather conditions.

"The fact that we has a dog with him might help," he said.

Kuthe said there was talk of bringing in helicopters if the weather clears enough but that doesn't sound likely as another six to ten inches of snow are predicted for the region throughout the night, according to the National Weather Service at Santa Teresa.

Emory Pass has received up to 10 inches of snow far, said meteorologist Jason Grzywacz, with temperatures in the upper 20s to lower 30s and wind gusts up to 20 miles per hour, with similar conditions predicted through most of the night.

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