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Hikers rescued near Deming

By Kevin Buey For the Sun-News

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DEMING - Four hikers clad in T-shirts and shorts were rescued early Friday morning in the Florida Mountains southeast of Deming after they underestimated changes in the weather and were stranded on a cliff.

The four, ranging in age from 18 to 21, were identified as Brittany Allison of Deming; Trey Adkins; Toh Yu Jin, a foreign exchange student from China; and Grace Kang or Kung.

The last three were believed to be visiting Deming from a college in Lubbock, Texas, said Peter Olson of the New Mexico State Police.

The hikers were flown to Mimbres Memorial Hospital in Deming, suffering from hypothermia, authorities said, but no condition reports were available.

The four headed off on their hike about 2 p.m. Thursday.

"It's a miracle they survived the night," Marc Levesque, a NMSP deputy incident commander, said. "Conditions up here (Thursday night) were pretty nasty. Clouds closed in, it was raining off and on for a spell. There was limited visibility. Really, really difficult conditions for the searchers."

Rescuers got to them about 1 a.m. Friday, Levesque said. Authorities learned of the hikers about 7 p.m. Thursday.

The hikers were broken up into two groups, with two trapped on a cliff in high terrain in Spring

Canyon and two below them.

"We don't know if they were stuck (at the lower spot) or just didn't want to leave them (those on the cliff)," Levesque said. "This is pretty rugged terrain in Spring Canyon. They just grossly underestimated how long it takes

to get up and down."

One of the hikers had a cell phone, authorities said.

"Two (Brittany and Grace) had to be lowered down the cliff 60 feet where the helicopter could pick them up," Olson said.

Personnel from several agencies collaborated on the search and rescue, including teams from Grant and Luna counties, Organ Mountain Technical Rescue Squad from Las Cruces, and the U.S. Border Patrol, whose helicopter helped lift the four from the area.

The Deming Fire Department, Sunshine Volunteer Fire Department and the American Red Cross in Las Cruces, were also called in to help.

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