

Boy rescued from Butler mine pit

By Elizabeth Evans
The REPUBLICAN

LAVELLE — A rescue crew of nearly 50 worked for five hours Saturday to save a teen-age boy who fell into a mine shaft while

hunting in a remote area of Butler Township, police said.

William L. Hubler Jr., 16, of RDI Ashland, sustained injuries during the 30-foot fall, police said.

He was listed in satisfactory condition this morning at Gei-

singer Medical Center, Danville, where he was flown by medical helicopter.

"It's a very treacherous area — very steep and rocky," said state Trooper H. Thadd Dillon, explaining why the rescue took so long.

Also, rescue workers were unsure whether the teen had a neck or back injury and needed to be cautious, he said.

Emergency workers from Lavelle, Washington and Yorkville fire companies used ropes. **Please see MINE/Page 6**

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chains and a Stokes rescue basket to haul Hubler from the abandoned hole, Dillon said.

Yorkville Fire Company was called in because of its mine rescue equipment.

Two or three workers went down into the shaft to secure the boy in the Stokes basket.

He was then hoisted up, according to Dillon.

The shaft is about 80 feet long, 30 feet wide and 60 feet deep.

Hubler landed on a rocky ledge about 30 feet from the top.

"Because of the area being so steep, (rescue workers) had to use chainsaws to cut a path to the road so they could carry him out quickly and safely," Dillon explained.

"That was time consuming."

According to the trooper, Hubler was hunting with his father, William Sr., and several other people when he fell in the shaft at 8:20 a.m.

"He was putting on a drive ... all of a sudden he disappeared," Dillon said.

The mine hole is not marked, he said.

"Hunters are familiar with the region and know about the hole. Apparently, he didn't."

A member of Hubler's hunting party ran down to Route 901 and flagged down motorist Pet-

er A. Spallone, Elysburg, who called 911 from his cellular telephone.

Spallone went up to the scene and stayed for the next five hours.

"I was very concerned," Spallone said. "The guy who flagged me down was out of breath, and when I saw the look on his face, I knew I had to do something."

Spallone said he was standing near the hole when Hubler was pulled from it.

"There was much relief," he said. "His eyes were blinking, but he didn't say anything."

Workers carried Hubler down the mountain to Route 901, which was closed for 30 minutes so a helicopter could land and pick up the teen, Dillon said.

The trooper said he was impressed by the rescue workers, all of whom are volunteers.

"It took a lot of effort and hard work, but everyone was concerned ... and willing to help."

Dillon said he is still trying to determine who owns the property. He said when he finds the owner, he will ask whether the hole can be filled in, or at least marked.

"Something will have to be done," he said. "It's a danger to hunters or anyone else out there."

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