

Injured Fallbrook man rescued from mine

TWENTYNINE PALMS — A Fallbrook man who broke his arm exploring an abandoned mine shaft near this desert town was pulled to safety after spending a night at the bottom, authorities said.

Jeff Smith, 29, was lifted from the mine Monday by a rescue team from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He was treated at Desert Hospital in Palm Springs and released.

"He was dirty; he was talking; he was fine," said Patty Furbush, a ranger with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

The 240-pound Smith and two friends had lowered themselves by rope into the 85-foot-deep Lorman Mine Sunday night, Furbush said.

They were climbing out of the mine about 140 miles east of Los Angeles when a rock dislodged and broke Smith's arm. His friends lowered Smith to the floor of the mine. They intended to use the ropes and their car to pull him out, but the car would not start, Furbush said.

One friend went looking for help on foot. After about four miles, he found some members of a ham radio operators group from Twentynine Palms who had set up camp at a highway rest area.

They notified authorities, who dispatched the rescue team.

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