

Teens rescued from mine pit

VIRGINIA (AP) — Two teenagers survived a chilly night in an abandoned mine pit before they were rescued.

Charles Grant of Mountain Iron and Joseph Kure of Virginia, both 18, were rescued from the Rouchleau Mine late Thursday and early Friday when rescuers rappelled along the pit wall where the two were stranded.

Assistant Fire Chief Jim Theodore characterized the rescue as "spectacular."

"There are all kinds of rescues performed all over the country, but very few of them have the vertical challenge that we had, along with the blasted (loose) wall that we were on."

The teens became trapped about 7 p.m., 200 feet into the pit, after they apparently walked into it while exploring a trail, Theodore said.

Kure was rescued at midnight Thursday while Grant was lowered to safety about 2:30 a.m. Friday. Neither required medical treatment.

Grant initially called high school buddies for help on his cell phone, Theodore said. But after realizing that professional help was needed, Grant called 911 about 9:30 p.m.

Rescue crews worked for about two hours atop a barren edge of the pit to establish a secure rescue location. A State Patrol helicopter was called to pluck the boys from the pit, but unstable rock along the pit wall prevented an air rescue.

A Virginia firefighter rappelled down to Kure, attached a "pick-off" harness strap to the teen, and lowered him to safety. A rescue squad member then rappelled to Grant and lowered him.

"They were hard to get at," said Jeff Lind, a Virginia assistant fire chief.

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