

2 Santa Cruz residents reportedly died in Sierra Nevada plane crash

By Alia Wilson, Santa Cruz Sentinel

EMIGRANT GAP – Two people, both believed to be from Santa Cruz County, died in a plane crash in the Sierra Nevada Friday afternoon, authorities reported.

Don French, manager of the Watsonville Municipal Airport, confirmed that the plane left from Watsonville on Friday morning. The single-engine Piper Cherokee Arrow was a rental from Monterey Bay Aviation Inc.'s United Flight Services, one of the oldest and busiest flight training and plane rental companies at the Watsonville Municipal Airport, French said.

According to French, who spoke to United Flight owner Bob Ross, Ross was shocked to hear the news because the pilot was "a well-trained and very competent individual; a guy with experience." Ross could not be reached to comment Friday.

A hiker found the wreckage about 1:45 p.m. near the Sierra Nevada community of Emigrant Gap. There were two bodies inside, according to Dena Erwin, public information officer with the Placer County Sheriff's Department. Erwin said the two people killed were the only ones on board the plane.

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