

Caltrans driver rescues missing man in Truckee

Robert Fish, a seasonal Caltrans equipment operator working out of Truckee, was plowing Interstate 80 on Christmas about 9pm when he noticed a man trying to wave down traffic near the eastbound Hirschdale Road off-ramp.



Robert Fish

James Mengel, 77, of Citrus Heights said he had been involved in a hit-and-run accident and his truck would not run. Fish noticed Mengel's speech was very quiet and that he seemed disoriented. Fish recognized this as possible signs of Alzheimer's, which he was familiar with after caring for his step-father who had the disease.

Fish had Mengel get in his snowplow to warm up because he wasn't wearing a jacket.

After a CHP officer arrived, it was determined that Mengel had been reported missing out of the Sacramento area and that a Silver Alert, used by the CHP for an unexplained or suspicious disappearance of an older person, had been issued for him more than a day earlier.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report