

Heavenly snowboarder survives night in wilderness



An X in the snow, to the right, alerted search teams to the missing snowboarder on Feb. 22. Photo/EDSO

By Kathryn Reed

A snowboarder spent the night out in a snowstorm Tuesday after skiing out of bounds at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

Aarin Yu, 32, of Los Angeles was at the top of Canyon Express chairlift when he got disoriented because of the whiteout conditions. El Dorado County sheriff's deputies said he admitted to going under a rope, but thought he was still in bounds. There is rope in the area that separates the runs from the terrain park.

“He got into heavy, thick snow and trees and realized he was not on the resort’s lands,” sheriff’s Deputy Greg Almos told *Lake Tahoe News*.

At 2:30pm he called ski patrol to say he was lost. They scoured the area where Yu thought he was. At about 4:15pm Heavenly called El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office realizing Yu probably was not inside the resort’s boundaries.

The weather and time of day kept searchers from going out until daybreak on Feb. 22.

When Yu heard the helicopters he drew an X in the snow. That is what led CalStar to locate him. He had spent the night in a tree well less than a mile from the resort.

A California Highway Patrol helicopter with an EDSO search and rescue team member used a hoist to retrieve Yu from the snow. He was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital with exposure concerns, but nothing life threatening.

Kevin Cooper, spokesman for Heavenly, would not talk about the importance of why ropes are put up at the resort or anything else about this incident. Instead he deferred all comment to the sheriff’s department.