



## Coconino County Sheriff's Office

*Bill Pribil, Sheriff*

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
Date: February 22, 2008

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### *Search and Rescue Prevention/Preparedness*

**Flagstaff, AZ-** The Coconino County Sheriff's Office and the Coconino National Forest would like to remind recreational users to be prepared for winter conditions on the San Francisco Peaks. Volunteers from the Coconino County Sheriff's Office and the United States Forest Service spoke with approximately thirty Arizona Snow Bowl visitors during the weekend of February 16 and 17. Volunteers provided information on winter preparedness and reminded recreational users of the backcountry permit requirements.

People venturing into mountainous terrain should carry winter survival gear. This equipment includes but is not limited to proper winter clothing, a shovel, and rescue beacon. Good wilderness navigation and route finding skills are essential. Be prepared for travel and emergencies in the remote winter mountain environment where rescue is not immediate. Deep snow accumulations in the northern Arizona backcountry can make over the snow travel difficult. Do not travel alone and remember to leave a detailed trip plan with a responsible person. It is important to review recent weather reports and forecasts as well as driving conditions prior to and during your trip. Carrying a cell phone is recommended; however, it may not always work in backcountry locations and should not substitute for good judgment and preparation. It is recommended that people who use the mountain backcountry receive formal safety education and winter survival skills. Free avalanche awareness clinics are offered by the Kachina Peaks Avalanche Center. More information about these clinics can be found at [www.kachinapeaks.org](http://www.kachinapeaks.org).

Winter backcountry travel into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness Area from Arizona Snowbowl requires a free annual backcountry permit. This includes the parking areas at FR 522 and Lamar Haines Wildlife Area. Backcountry permits are available in Flagstaff at the Peaks Ranger Station, 5075 N. Highway 89, and the Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1824 S Thompson St. Permits will also be available at Arizona Snowbowl's Agassiz Lodge weekend mornings when the ski area is open.