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OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
COUNTY OF INYO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 26, 2026

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Deceased Individual Recovered on Mount Whitney

On October 19, 2026, at approximately 9:40 p.m., the Inyo County Sheriff's Office (ICSO) received a report from motel staff in Lone Pine regarding a guest who had failed to check out and left personal belongings behind. Staff reported the guest had planned to hike in the area. Deputies initially had limited information regarding the individual's intended route or whereabouts. Attempts to contact him through the department's Rapid Deploy messaging system went unanswered.

On October 20, 2026, at approximately 1:00 p.m., ICSO personnel located the individual's vehicle at Whitney Portal. Through coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, deputies confirmed the individual had a permit for the Mountaineer's Route on October 18, 2026. Later that day, a California Highway Patrol (CHP) helicopter located a deceased climber along the Mountaineer's Route on Mount Whitney. A storm system subsequently moved into the area, bringing snow and hazardous weather conditions that delayed recovery efforts.

On Sunday, October 25, 2026, conditions allowed recovery operations to proceed. CHP helicopter H-82 inserted a highly skilled Inyo County Search and Rescue (SAR) team at Iceberg Lake. The team navigated snow and ice to reach the climber, whose remains were covered in snow. Using specialized technical skills and extreme caution, the team reached the location, and H-82 hoisted the individual from an elevation of approximately 13,600 feet. The team then hiked back to Iceberg Lake, where H-82 transported them from the area.

The deceased individual was transferred to the Inyo County Coroner's Office for positive identification.

The Inyo County Sheriff's Office extends its sincere condolences to the individual's family and loved ones during this difficult time.

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