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NEWS RELEASE - 2019-07

For Immediate Release: October 30, 2019

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Falmouth Fire-EMS Responds to Lost Hiker in Woods

On Wednesday afternoon at 4:35 p.m. the Falmouth Fire-EMS Department was called to a report of a hiker lost in the woods behind Oxford Woods Drive in West Falmouth. A relative of the hiker called the Falmouth Fire Station and when they were forwarded to Falmouth dispatch, the dispatcher asked that the relative to instruct the hiker to call 911. Going through the 911 system provided the same dispatcher with the location of the caller. The dispatcher relayed the latitude and longitude coordinates to the responding fire personnel, and using these, a crew of 2 firefighters from Falmouth Fire-EMS entered the trail system at the end of Oxford Woods and was able to locate her approximately 1 ½ miles into the woods. The crew was then able to safely walk the hiker out of the woods just as it was getting dark. In total, it took about an hour to reach the hiker and walk her out of the woods.

The department's off-road UTV was brought to the scene but was only able to get about ¼ of the way to the hiker, due to the trail becoming too narrow. The two firefighters on the UTV then walked the rest of the way until meeting up with the woman and her dog on one of the outer trails. Falmouth Fire-EMS Assistant Chief Jay Hallett, the incident commander of the incident, was tracking the two firefighters using I Am Responding, a software program the department has been using for the past few years to track responding firefighters to emergency calls. Using the firefighters' location on I Am Responding, and the coordinates of the lost hiker obtained through the dispatcher, Assistant Chief Hallett was able to guide his crews to the location of the hiker. Assistant Chief Hallett credited the technology in helping the crews find the missing hiker, just as the woods were becoming dark. If it took even 15 minutes longer, the walk back out of the woods would have gotten much more difficult due to the darkness. Since the two firefighters and missing hiker came out of the woods on Summit Terrace, a nearly 3-mile drive from Oxford Woods, a crew from the Windham Fire Department hiked into the woods to retrieve the Falmouth UTV. All units were out of the woods by 6 pm.

The Windham Fire Department and the Falmouth Police Department assisted the Falmouth Fire-EMS crews on scene. Once out of the woods the hiker and her dog were brought back to her vehicle.

End of release.

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