

PRESS RELEASE: PLSAR MERGES WITH BCSO

12 JAN 2018 – Coolin, ID

On 12 JAN 2018, the Priest Lake Search & Rescue, Inc., (PLSAR) Board of Directors voted unanimously to transfer “Operational Control” of assets to the Bonner County Sheriff’s Office (BCSO), and to dissolve the non-profit corporation (fundraising business). This transition is expected to be seamless due to the excellent and close working relationship between PLSAR and BCSO.

Upon final dissolution, ownership of rescue equipment, including the radios and repeater network will be transferred to BCSO to ensure it continues to be used for search and rescue missions. Under Idaho Code 31-2229, the Sheriff has responsibility for conducting search and rescue operations within Bonner County. PLSAR provided that capability for 17 years, while developing, training, and equipping volunteers with the necessary rescue equipment, all at no cost to Bonner County. When the volunteers initially joined, they completed applications for both PLSAR and BCSO. Consequently, the volunteers have already been vetted and are members of BCSO’s Volunteer Search and Rescue Unit.

PLSAR has achieved its stated mission to provide an immediate response force of well trained and properly equipped volunteers to assist persons lost, injured or in distress within Bonner County, and to serve the public welfare in any disaster or emergency, when requested by proper authority. PLSAR was first organized on 31 JAN 2001 with 30 volunteers, and officially incorporated on 14 MAR 2002 as a registered non-profit 501 (c) (3) charity under Federal IRS rules. PLSAR conducted more than 92 missions and assisted over 119 persons, in addition to recovering 17 fatalities, between JAN 2001 and JAN 2018. PLSAR also recruited and trained more than 250 volunteers during this same time frame. In addition to basic search and rescue training including First-aid & CPR, Map & Compass, GPS, and Winter Survival Skills, the technical rescue volunteers received advanced training in Rope Rescue, Swift Water Rescue, and Wilderness First-aid.

Through grants and donations, the Team acquired \$200,000 worth of rescue equipment, including the development of a sophisticated VHF radio communications network that provides coverage from Boundary County to Kootenai County and from Washington to Montana, which provides coverage for most of the remote backcountry of Bonner County. The digital radio system provides GPS locations for every field unit. This enhances command’s situational awareness on every mission, and increases the volunteers’ safety. PLSAR recently expanded its radio coverage with a new repeater on Little Blacktail, and has another site paid for and under contract at Lakeview. It is among the most advanced radio network system operating in Bonner County.

Some equipment has been previously provided to North of the Narrows Fire District, Coolin-Cavanaugh Bay Fire District, and the Priest Lake EMTs [another 501 (c) (3) charity], including Ice Rescue Anti-Exposure Suits, and an enclosed Snowbulance that can be towed behind an ATV on wheels, or a snowmobile on skis. PLEMTs are often called out ahead of PLSAR, and this ensures the needed equipment is on-scene and available. After all pending invoices are satisfied, and Federal and State filings are completed, remaining funds from PLSAR will be provided to PLEMTs, since most of the donations have been received from individuals with strong connections to Priest Lake.

The dissolution was effective 12 JAN 2018 and will be filed with the Idaho Secretary of State. In anticipation of this dissolution action, PLSAR declined to accept donations in 2018.

Approved by: PLSAR Board of Directors