



OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT



Date: February 8th, 2015
Complaint Number: 15-105780
Type of Incident: Fatal boating accident
Reporting Officer: Deputy Kelly Vandenberg
Supervisor Approval: Sergeant Bryan Muir

On Saturday, February 7th, 2015 at approximately 2:34 pm, the Kent County Sheriff's Department along with the Plainfield Fire Department and Rockford Ambulance were dispatched to the area of Rio Rogue Lane NE and Rogewood DR NE on a report of a possible boating accident.

Upon emergency personnel arriving on scene they were able to determine two men had been kayaking on the Rogue River when they had encountered a large body of ice on the river. The men attempted exit their kayaks to walk over the ice, when one of the subject's kayak began to take on water.

The victim, Thomas Shepard, a 65 year old Grand Rapids resident was pulled under the ice shelf by the strong current and the second kayaker, Daniel Silverthorn, a 50 year old Grand Rapids resident attempted to render aid to his friend, but was unsuccessful. Neither subject had been wearing a personal floatation device.

After attempting to render aid, Silverthorn made contact with nearby residents, who contacted 9-1-1.

The sheriff's departments dive team, along with the assistance of the Plainfield and Cannon Township fire departments and Aeromed conducted an extensive search in an attempt to locate and recover Shepard's body. The initial search was terminated late Saturday night after conditions became unsafe for emergency personnel.

A second search was conducted in the early morning hours of Sunday, February 8th by the sheriff's department along with the Plainfield and Cannon township fire departments. During the course of the secondary search, Shepard's body was located a short distance from where he had last been seen alive.

The medical examiner's office was contacted and the victim's family was notified of the recovery.

No foul play is suspected and the sheriff's department recommends all boaters wear a personal floatation device while boating.