MISSING MAN FOUND ALIVE AFTER BEING TRAPPED IN VEHICLE FOR NEARLY 24 HOURS

Posted on June 26, 2019 by Tyler Barker

BUCHANAN COUNTY, VA (WOAY) - A missing man has been found alive after being trapped in his crashed vehicle for nearly 24 hours on Elkins Branch Road in Buchanan County, VA.

On Monday night, June 24, 2019, family members of Richard David Chafin, 67 years old, reported to the Buchanan County Sheriff's Office that he had not returned home from what was supposed to be a quick trip to Grundy to conduct routine business. Chafin had left his residence on Old Lester's Fork Road earlier that day at approximately 2:00p.m in a 2004 Volkswagen Touareg. Family and friends had searched the area and contacted law enforcement.

On Tuesday morning, June 25, 2019, Buchanan County Sheriff's Office Investigators along with the Virginia State Police coordinated together to employ the VSP Med-Flight helicopter to search the route that Chafin would have commonly used to travel to Grundy. Officials met at Elkins Branch Mountain to link with VSP Med Flight. At that time, an area was noticed that looked to have fresh scrape marks and vehicle debris leading over a steep embankment from the roadway. Upon investigating and following the scrape marks and vehicle debris, the vehicle that Chafin was driving was found resting on its roof. Upon inspecting the vehicle Chafin was found trapped inside the vehicle, alive. The vehicle was approximately 200 yards from the roadway, down steep terrain, under a canopy of overgrowth and trees. The vehicle was not visible from the roadway.

Because of the steep terrain, a rescue operation involving rappelling ropes, cables and wenches, and

a Stokes Basket was used to extricate Chafin back to the road. Members from Grundy Fire Department, Slate Creek Fire Department, Russell Prater Fire and Rescue, and Rescue 33 Ambulance Service responded in the rescue effort. Chafin was evaluated on scene and found to have minor injuries and transported via VSP Med Flight to Bristol Regional Medical Center for further medical treatment and observation as a precaution.

Sheriff Foster states, "It's truly a blessing that Chafin was found alive after nearly 24 hours trapped in his crashed vehicle. God was watching over him and protecting him. I want to thank all those who responded in this rescue operation."

The Virginia State Police is continuing the investigating into the cause of the crash.