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Sheriff Lou Vallario
Garfield County, Colorado

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 4, 2018

Time: 3:50 PM

Title: I-70 and US 6 Closed for 3 ½ Hours Over Public Safety Concerns

IMPORTANT: Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, CO. –

I-70 and US Highway 6 was closed today between exit 87 (West Rifle Exit) and the Rulison exit from approximately 11:00 AM until 2:30 PM.

Around 11:00 AM Garfield County Deputies and CSP responded to a call of a possible stabbing incident in the vicinity of the West Rifle Exit along I-70. Further investigation at the scene resulted in the discovery that one individual had fled to the nearby hillside and had positioned himself in a rocky area approximately 200 yards from the Interstate and the paralleling US Highway 6.

Initial reports also indicated that the individual might have a knife wound. It was unclear as to whether or not he had a firearm. Due to the proximity of the suspect to the Interstate and the potential for a catastrophic event should there be an exchange of gunfire it was decided early on; the closure of I-70 as well as US 6 was in the best interest of public safety.

Early attempts to verbally negotiate with the suspect and ask him to surrender were unsuccessful. In the end the Garfield County All Hazards Response Team was deployed to bring the individual down from the hillside. No shots were fired and by 2:30 the suspect was in custody; eastbound I-70 as well as US Highway 6 was reopened.

Westbound I-70 was opened later once operational equipment including law enforcement vehicles, ambulances and St Mary's Care Flight were cleared. Fortunately no injuries were received by law enforcement officers or the suspect during the operations that ultimately removed him from the hillside and led to his arrest.

The investigation as to what led to the initial flight to the hillside by the suspect as well as other charges that may be filed are part of an ongoing, active investigation.

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office would like to thank all the first responders and law enforcement including Colorado State Patrol, Rifle Police Department, Parachute Police Department, the Garfield County All Hazards Response Team, the Crisis Negotiation Team, CRFR, Grand Valley Fire, CDOT, St Mary's Care Flight, the travelers of the I-70 Corridor and the citizens of Garfield County who worked together and cooperated to bring this incident to a safe conclusion.

No additional information will be released.

The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.

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