



## *Chelan County Sheriff's Office*

***Brian Burnett, Sheriff***

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Law and Justice Bldg ★ 401 Washington Street #1 ★ Wenatchee, WA 98801  
Phone: (509) 667-6851 ★ Fax: (509) 667 6860

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sergeant Kent Sisson

Incident #: 16C09985 **Rafting Fatality**

Phone: 509.667.6863

**Wenatchee River – Tumwater Canyon**

Date: 08/20/2016

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/sheriff>

**###**

Sheriff Brian Burnett reports one person died and another had to be rescued after a raft overturned in the Tumwater Canyon portion of the Wenatchee River just west of Leavenworth Saturday evening. A Washington State Patrol Trooper was originally flagged down and notified of incident at approximately 9:11pm. He immediately notified the RIVERCOM Regional Dispatch Center for swift water rescue response.

It was determined that a group of four subjects had placed two small rafts in the Wenatchee River below the Tumwater Dam along US Highway 2 at about 7:30pm. Two subjects entered each raft and they began floating the river without knowledge of the hazardous white water conditions downriver near mileposts 98 to 99 just west of Leavenworth. At one point, the raft carrying Charles Beedle Sr. 68yoa (Bremerton, WA) and his daughter-in-law, Heather Mjelde (also of Bremerton) began having difficulty navigating the swift water. Both subjects ended up in the river and were swept a significant distance through the rough water and boulders. Mjelde was eventually able to work her way to the north side of the river and hold onto a rock until she was located and rescued by emergency responders. The two subjects in the second raft, Charles F. Beedle Jr (43yoa – Port Orchard, WA) and his 12-year old son self-rescued to the north side of the river and were unharmed. None of the four subjects involved were wearing personal floatation devices.

An extensive search was conducted by the Chelan County Swift Water Rescue Team, CCSO Deputies, Fire District #3 personnel, Cascade Ambulance medics, and State Troopers in an attempt to locate Charles Beedle Sr. Saturday evening. The search was suspended with negative results just after midnight.

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**Integrity ★ Teamwork ★ Excellence**

**Jason Mathews**  
Undersheriff

★

**Dave Helvey**  
Chief of Special Operations

★

**Rick Johnson**  
Chief of Patrol

**Valerie Karnes**  
Chief Civil Deputy

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**Jan Brincat**  
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On Sunday morning at 7:00am the search resumed using trained swift water personnel and deputies. Family members checking an area of the river in the 9200 block of Icicle Road located the body of Charles Beedle Sr. at about 7:40am. He had been swept up onto a low lying boulder in the middle of the river. Swift water personnel recovered the body without incident by 8:40am. The Chelan County Coroner's Office has possession of the body.

The Chelan County Sheriff's Office would like to remind anyone planning a recreational rafting trip take notice of the following recommendations:

- Always wear personal floatation devices (life vests)
- Have knowledge of the entire waterway and especially downstream hazards prior to beginning the trip. The Tumwater Canyon is **NOT** a recommended area for recreational rafting due to hazardous swift water and rapids.
- Have at least one person with rafting experience in the group and bring along extra paddles, extra floatation devices, throw ropes, and a cell phone.

Inquiries reference this media release may be directed to Sergeant Kent Sisson with the Sheriff's Office.

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