

## LOCAL NEWS

## Colorado man thought to have drowned in Kalamazoo River

Posted About Seven Years Ago by Jean Gallup

Michael Joseph Baird, 34, from Englewood, CO, was visiting relatives in the Plainwell area when he was reported missing Thursday evening when he failed to come home after a walk in Plainwell where he was known to visit the river. Allegan County Central Dispatch received a 911 call at 8:30 p.m. Thursday reporting a person in the Kalamazoo River calling for help in the North Street area in Plainwell, the Allegan County Sheriff's Office reports.

Plainwell Department of Public Safety and Otsego City Police Department officers and sheriff's deputies responded to the call and confirmed that a man, suspected to be Baird, had fallen into the river and fallen victim to strong currents.

Rescue efforts began from downtown Plainwell to the area of the U.S.131 overpass. Life lines and rescue devices were used, but the man was unable to grab hold. Deputies made additional attempts at rescue in the 12<sup>th</sup> Street area of Otsego Township without success. Shortly after the attempts, the victim no longer responded to officers and disappeared from view.

Search efforts were suspended just after midnight Thursday, resumed Friday morning and into late afternoon when the operation was transitioned to recovery efforts. Extremely high water levels, swift currents and river hydrology, natural deadfall and debris hampered the efforts.

The search was temporarily called off at 6 p.m. until weather and water conditions improve. The sheriff's office will monitor water levels and environmental conditions daily to determine when operations can safely resume reducing substantial risk to personnel.

The cause of the incident is unknown, however, it is believed to be accidental. The sheriff's office received a report of a missing person from the Plainwell area shortly after the incident was reported to 911.

Agencies involved with the initial rescue attempts and recovery efforts include the Plainwell Department of Public Safety, the Otsego Police Department, the Otsego Fire Department, Plainwell EMS, members of the Allegan County Sheriff's Office Road Patrol, Marine Division and Dive / Rescue & Recovery Team, the Allegan County volunteer Search & Rescue Team and the Michigan State Police.