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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **AirFlare rescue system adopted by all Inland Northwest ski areas**

SPOKANE, Wash. (Feb. 5, 2024) — AirFlare, the app that turns your smartphone into an outdoors rescue locator, is now in use by ski patrol at all five ski areas within a 2-hour drive of Spokane. Mount Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park and 49° North Ski Area recently signed on as AirFlare partners, joining early adopters Lookout Pass Ski & Recreation Area, Silver Mountain Resort, and Schweitzer.

The result is a robust safety net for skiers and snowboarders exploring Eastern Washington and North Idaho ski areas.

“It’s simple now,” AirFlare inventor, founder, and CEO Eliot Gillum said. “No matter which mountain is your favorite, faster than riding a single lift, you can install AirFlare on your phone, protect yourself, and bring comfort to those who care about you.

“We started AirFlare to leverage the power of the smartphone into saving lives, improve outcomes, and bring peace of mind. Today, smartphones are everywhere and we hope residents and visitors will be as eager to share our vision as these resorts to ensure the entire Inland Northwest has the latest in safety technology.”

Ski patrollers from its Inland Northwest resort partners concur.

“We have used AirFlare for three seasons and love the platform,” John Batchelder, paid patrol director at Lookout Pass, said. “The real-time training and support have been excellent. We have used AirFlare to pinpoint the location of guests, both in and out of bounds.”

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He said Lookout Pass has used AirFlare in two ways specifically to assist guests.

“One is to get our staff to the guest's location and the other is to communicate with a mobile guest how they should proceed to make it back to the area or a pickup point,” Batchelder said. “The latter method allows us to monitor the progress and keep staff at their posts until direct contact and pickup is appropriate. We are grateful for this wonderful tool.”

Angie Nylund, senior ski patroller/training coordinator at Schweitzer, agreed.

“AirFlare has proven to be an indispensable asset for Schweitzer, significantly improving our operations,” Nylund said. “We utilize it not only to locate lost individuals in the backcountry but also to pinpoint injured skiers within our ski area boundary. Thanks to AirFlare, our search times have seen a remarkable reduction, allowing us to offer our guests a superior experience. The ability to find injured skiers on the first run-through has not only saved considerable time but has also optimized the allocation of resources.”

Silver Mountain Resort spokesman Gus Colburn echoed those sentiments.

“AirFlare has been a useful tool for our ski patrol,” Colburn said. “They have been a great resource for the mountain, and we look forward to our continued partnership with them.”

Mt. Spokane General Manager Jim van Loben Sels expects AirFlare will have a significant impact on its ski patrol operations.

“Mt. Spokane is excited to take advantage of AirFlare to aid in locating guests in need of help,” van Loben Sels said. “It will make our job much more efficient!”

John Huffstutter, a ski patroller at 49° North and an EMT in Chewelah, Wash., concurred.

“AirFlare has ready-in-your-pocket convenience and gives us a rapid response capability for both in-bounds and out-of-bounds areas,” Huffstutter said. “It’s a great tool for us to have in the box — it’s quick, easy to use, and (so far) reliable. It promises to be a valuable tool for our team as we add terrain and services in the coming years.”

Last winter AirFlare helped save the life of an Idaho skier who got lost in the fog at Soldier Mountain in Southern Idaho at the end of the day and wound up out of bounds. She phoned the resort’s front office to report herself lost and a staff member sent her a text message with a hyperlink to the AirFlare app, which she was able to download. With the help of AirFlare, ski patrollers pinpointed her on the map and broke trail through at least 2 feet of fresh, wet snow for nearly two hours to get her out.

Visit [airflare.com/life-save](https://airflare.com/life-save) for more details about the rescue.

“Mishaps can happen to anyone at any time — sometimes it’s weather, lack of preparedness, or just bad luck,” Gillum said. “But AirFlare is serious protection that everyone can have on them all the time. Research shows more than 90 percent of people bring their phone on outdoor activities.”

According to Gillum, the core functionality of AirFlare’s smartphone app, which is designed for strong, spotty, or zero connectivity, makes the phone instantly locatable by rescuers via even a fleeting Internet connection. In addition, the company offers rescuers their proprietary detector hardware that uses WiFi and Bluetooth to find a phone from up to 1km away. Friends and family can also use the app to check in via the same Internet-based technology as rescuers.

For rescuers, Gillum said AirFlare is a powerful toolset that makes them more efficient and effective at locating and assisting people in need of help. A web- or app-based console allows rescuers to initiate searches for AirFlare users or send an SMS message to non-AirFlare users allowing manual location transmission.

AirFlare recently launched Family Packs, making it easier for heads of households or AirFlare superfans to share the app with loved ones. Now, one person can keep friends and family safe with a single purchase or low-cost yearly subscription.

AirFlare now supports live chat between rescuers and users. It can be used to provide extra information to rescuers before they leave base, share new information in both directions as the situation develops, and facilitate rescuers remotely guiding users to safety.

“While the high quality and extreme accessibility of AirFlare may not always be easy to put your finger on, innovative features like this can very concretely demonstrate the unique power of our smartphone-based and 100-percent safety-focused system,” Gillum said.

AirFlare co-founder Denis Lee said that upon hearing about AirFlare, many people mistakenly compare it to traditional special-purpose locator devices.

“We prefer to think of AirFlare as a base level of protection that everyone can have, complementing and strongly encouraging situationally appropriate tools,” he said. “From avalanche beacons to satellite emergency notification devices, all are unique in their utility, training, and costs. Just as a craftsman wouldn’t leave a screwdriver at home because they’re carrying a hammer, we believe everyone should always have all the right tools for the job. AirFlare is the protection *everyone* can have *all the time*.”

The applications go far beyond ski areas, according to Lee.

“Virtually anyone who adventures in the outdoors can benefit from using AirFlare, including anglers, ATV and UTV riders, bicyclists and mountain bikers, birders, boaters, canoers, dirt bikers, hikers and trail runners, horseback riders, hunters, kayakers, rafters, rock climbers, snowmobilers, and snowshoers,” Lee said. “You can even use it to find your friends at music festivals and theme parks. In all those environments, cellular service is often less than perfect and AirFlare’s unique technology shines.”

Gillum, Lee, and Kevin Lau founded San-Francisco-based Vector Flight LLC in 2016. The technology provider’s driving vision is to bring rescue locators to the masses by leveraging the capabilities and ubiquity of today’s smart devices. AirFlare’s founders believe a world where everyone actually has a locator with them the day they need it is one with less tragedy and more focus on enjoying the outdoors, as well as one where rescuers can avoid unnecessary risk to themselves. They would like to thank AirFlare’s partners at mountain resorts and in search-and-rescue teams that have demonstrated the vision and tenacity to support the rise of this powerful new technology.

## HOW TO GET AIRFLARE

Users can download AirFlare on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

- AirFlare offers many valuable features for free. The core locator functionality is supported by an annual subscription, which is currently \$4.99, or a lifetime purchase for \$14.99. Family plans, which include purchases and subscriptions for either five or 10 additional people, cost between \$8.99 annually and \$48 one time.
- Some ski areas offer it free to season passholders. Visit [airflare.com](https://airflare.com) for a list of participating mountains and other details.

Mountain resorts interested in using AirFlare to protect guests and staff should contact AirFlare co-founder Denis Lee at [denis@airflare.com](mailto:denis@airflare.com).

AirFlare also has an easy, low-cost program to onboard members of search-and-rescue teams. Email [support@airflare.com](mailto:support@airflare.com) for more information.

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