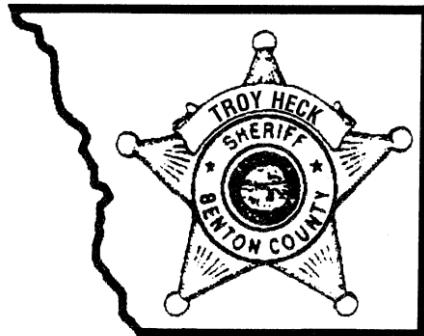


# BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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**Troy Heck, Sheriff**  
**Neal Jacobson, Chief Deputy**

## PRESS RELEASE

**DATE: 01/12/2024**

### **AUTHORITY OF SHERIFF TROY HECK**

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Benton County Sheriff's Office responded to the report of a snowmobile that had fallen through the ice on Little Rock Lake.

At about 11:30 am on January 12<sup>th</sup>, the Benton County Sheriff's Office received a call from a witness on shore reporting that a snowmobile had fallen through the ice on the main basin of Little Rock Lake. The caller reported seeing the snowmobile disappear below the water before observing the driver of the snowmobile climb back onto the ice. The caller reported the driver appeared to be walking toward a fish house near the St. Regis landing on the lake. Responding deputies arrived at the St. Regis landing in Watab Township and met with the lone victim, a 16-year-old boy from Rice, MN. Prior to the deputies' arrival, the boy had contacted an angler in a fish house near the St. Regis Landing. The angler transported the boy to shore from the fish house on another snowmobile. The boy was treated at the scene for hypothermia by deputies and fire fighters from the Rice Rescue Squad. The boy told investigating deputies that he had driven his snowmobile onto Little Rock Lake at the St. Regis access and headed to the southeast. Deputies learned that about ½ mile from shore, the boy observed open water lying ahead of his path. The boy attempted to stop his snowmobile but was unable to avoid falling into the open water. The boy was transported by Mayo Ambulance to the St. Cloud Hospital for further evaluation. The Sauk Rapids Fire Department provided the assistance of their air boat to investigating deputies on the scene. Investigating deputies were also assisted at the scene by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The Benton County Sheriff's Office will be working with the boy and his family to ensure the snowmobile is removed from the lake according to state law.

Even with the drop in temperatures over the last several days, thin ice and open water exists on significant portions of Little Rock Lake and other area lakes. Anyone venturing onto the ice should exercise extreme caution, use appropriate tools to test ice thickness, and have handy self-rescue or floatation devices.

Troy Heck  
Benton County Sheriff