

New tech used to save caver trapped vertically in Alberta’s ‘Psych Squeeze’

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The Canadian Press

A caver has been rescued after being trapped underground at the Rat’s Nest Cave in Canmore, Alta., in an operation that deployed volunteer-built underground radio technology for the first time.

Search and Rescue Alberta said the man became pinned in a tight spot known as the “Psych Squeeze” around 11:30 a.m. last Saturday.

The Alberta/BC Cave Rescue team was called in, and hammer drills were used to remove rock. The caver, who was trapped vertically, was eased out in a process measured in “inches per hour.”

“Cave rescues are very rare and it’s even rarer to have to have someone stuck in a tight space and can’t free themselves,” said Christian Stenner, provincial co-ordinator with the Alberta/British Columbia Cave Rescue Service.

According to the Travel Alberta website, Rat’s Nest is Canada’s fourth-longest cave. The website says it is only accessible via a guided tour, and features “incredibly tight passageways” with names like The Laundry Chute. Another passageway has a 20-metre rappel.

“Both of these tours can be work, and are not for the out of shape. Expect bruises after your foray into the cave,” the website warns.

Stenner said the caver made his way a few hundred metres into the cave. He said it varies from an area where you can walk upright to spots which can require crawling on your hands and knees.

Stenner said he was wedged in the area about three metres down the cave, which was likely 30 to 40 metres from the actual surface of the ground. The man was freed around 10 p.m. and he finally emerged from the cave around midnight, after an operation involving 13 cave rescuers, 10 firefighters and two Kananaskis Mountain rescuers.

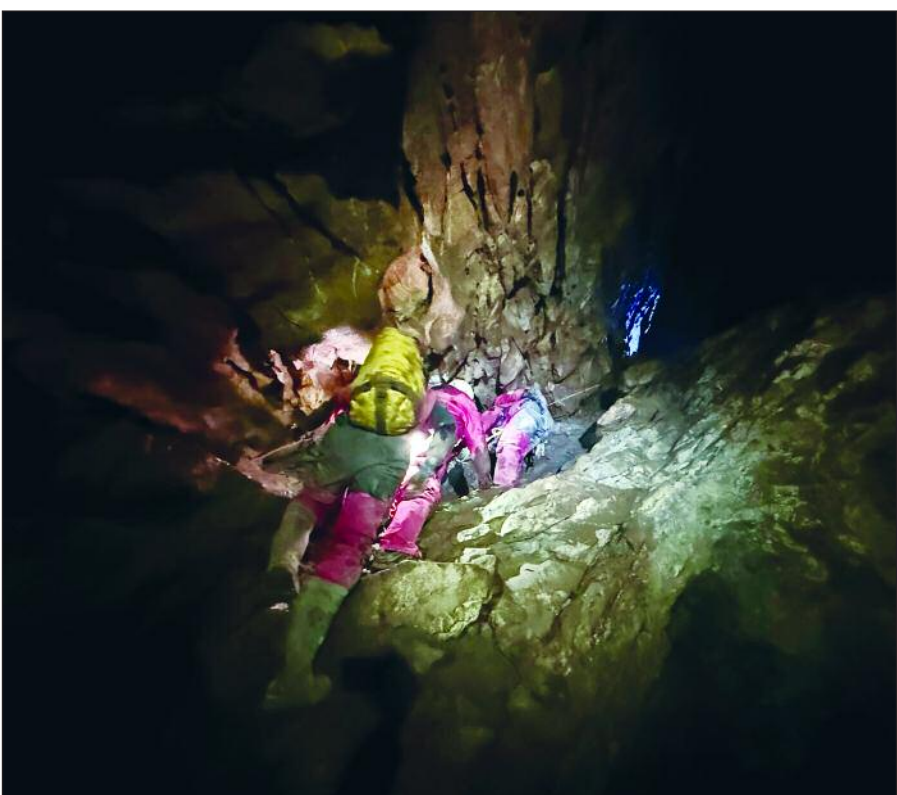
“I think he was pretty relieved. In the end he didn’t require to go to hospital or anything — it was just that physical entrapment. Once he was freed from that he was maybe a bit bruised, sore and tired because being trapped for many hours and trying to move exerts a lot of energy,” said Stenner.

“I don’t know if there was a cheer but certainly some relief and happiness.”

Stenner said a cave radio that transmits signals through rock was used in a live operation for the first time.

The technology was developed by members of Alberta/BC Cave Rescue, which is part of Search and Rescue Alberta, in response to the difficulty of using traditional communication methods like phones, radios or GPS underground.

“The ultra-low frequency



CP HANDOUT SEARCH AND RESCUE ALBERTA
Search and Rescue Alberta and Alberta/BC Cave Rescue members along with Canmore Fire Rescue prepare to rescue a caver trapped in Rat’s Nest Cave, in Canmore, on Aug. 15.

radio wave is so wide it can penetrate through material like rock. It can go up to a half-kilometre ... whereas the wave from a regular radio signal or a cellphone is such a narrow wave that when it hits material ... it gets blocked,” he said.

It allows users to text through the dense rock and Stenner said if you compare the old way of doing things, this is much quicker.

“If you have to wait for a person to come out of the cave, tell the commander what the status is and then you have to send a person back into the

cave to send the message or to get the resources that they need, it’s time consuming. So, to have the way to communicate almost instantaneously cuts down the time,” he said.

Work on the technology has been underway for years and this was its maiden voyage.

Stenner said that because cave rescues are rare, the radios had not actually been deployed on a live rescue. The latest version of the hardware was only recently finished.

“It worked perfectly. We couldn’t be happier,” Stenner said.

Stenner said the radio tech

has already drawn interest from cave rescue groups around the world and it could have other useful applications in events including mine cave-ins.

John Alexander, the CEO of Search and Rescue Alberta, said the Rat’s Nest rescue “is a display of what can be achieved when multiple emergency response agencies come together in collaboration, and of the incredible innovation and initiative taken by our 1,500 volunteer search and rescue professionals who defy odds and overcome barriers every day, so others may live.”

Market Watch

S&P/TSX 36,620.23 +254.81	S&P 500 7,674.37 +33.21	DOW 53,277.01 +517.80	NASDAQ 26,180.46 +113.29	DOLLAR 72.67¢US +0.13¢	OIL per barrel US\$87.06 +0.23	GOLD US\$4,680.60 +\$109.20
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PUBLIC NOTICES



Medicine Hat

8AM - 4PM SPECIAL SERVICES

Electric Outages	403.529.8260
Gas Emergency	403.529.8191
Water & Sewer Emergency	403.502.8042
After Hours Special Services	403.526.2828

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS APPROVED AUGUST 13 TO AUGUST 19, 2026

RESIDENTIAL

107 PRAIRIE DRIVE NE - Accessory Building (Garage)

104 STANFIELD WAY SE - Residential Accessory Building (Shed)

144 8 STREET NE - Residential Accessory Building (Garage)

1885 18 AVENUE SE - Residential Accessory Building (Garage)

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL

666 5 STREET SW - Non-Residential Addition (Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Vestibule Addition)

101 1111 KINGSWAY AVE SE - Change Of Use To Office, Minor

HOME BUSINESS

1 19 2 STREET NE - Home Business Minor - Service (Crane/Hoist Repairs).

76 TURNER DRIVE SE - Home Business Minor - Carpentry/Cabinets/Acoustical Installation. (Refused. No application fee payment / Incomplete application).

522 8 STREET SE - Home Business Minor - Plumbing/Gasfitter.

838 HARGRAVE WAY NW - Home Business Minor - Photography and Equipment.

474 8 STREET SE - Home Business Minor - Service (Dog Walking)/Personal Care Aid.

71 SUNRISE STREET SW - Home Business Minor - Online Sales (Kids Apparel).

27 STERLING GREEN SE - Home Business Minor - Landscaping/Consultant.

36 PRONGHORN STREET NE - Home Business Minor - Electrician.



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Keystone XL returns as Canada looks for oil buyers beyond the US

SONAL GUPTA
Local Journalism Initiative

As Ottawa and Alberta push for a new West Coast pipeline, Keystone XL is back in the debate as a potentially cheaper and faster way to move more Alberta crude.

First proposed in 2008, Keystone XL was meant to carry oilsands crude from Alberta into the US pipeline system and toward Gulf Coast refineries built to process heavy oil. US President Donald Trump brought the issue back into focus Tuesday when he delayed threatened tariffs on Canadian goods for three days and said Keystone XL “may be awoken from the grave.”

The comments land as the provincial and federal governments are advancing a West Coast pipeline as a nation-building project that would open markets in Asia and reduce Canada’s exposure to US trade threats.

But the Keystone route has a stronger near-term business case because it connects Alberta crude to refineries that already want it, said Richard Masson, former CEO of the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission.

“The reality is Canada wants to maintain and enhance the US market, because that’s a good market for us, but we also want to have diversification, which means getting to the West Coast,” Masson said.

Premier Danielle Smith said the province is pursuing pipeline options in multiple directions.

“While there’s still more work to be done, I’m encouraged by the recent progress we’ve seen in Canada-US trade negotiations,” Smith said in an email statement to Canada’s National Observer.

“As we await the details of this deal, I urge the federal government to continue negotiating to resolve the remaining tariff issues and restore free and fair trade with the United States, while also diversifying and strengthening the Canadian economy.”

“Alberta wants to build new pipelines West, East, North, and South, and we are always in discussions with industry to support these opportunities,” Smith said.

mercial case because it would add capacity to the US, Canada’s largest oil market, where Gulf Coast refineries are built to process heavy crude from Alberta.

The US received 97 per cent of Canada’s crude oil exports by value in the decade before the Trans Mountain expansion. Even after the expansion, it still accounted for 90.1 per cent of crude exports in 2025.

If Alberta crude can reach Gulf Coast refineries efficiently, Masson said producers are more likely to receive world prices; currently Canadian oil bound for the US is sold at a discount relative to global prices for similar products. Higher producer returns also mean more royalties and taxes for governments.

Expanding or optimizing an existing pipeline system would likely be the lowest-cost way to increase Canada’s export capacity, said Celina Hwang, director of Canadian crude oil markets at S&P Global Energy. But she said the lowest-cost route for a pipeline operator may not be the best economic choice for Canada.

Hwang said Alberta sees new pipeline capacity as a way to attract more investment into Western Canada’s oil sector. The choice for Canada is whether to keep expanding through the US system or take the harder but more independent route of building new access to global markets from Canada’s West Coast, she added.

The West Coast proposal would give Canadian producers access to more buyers in Asia and reduce dependence on the US, but Masson said diversification would come at a higher cost. The federal-Alberta proposal would largely follow the existing Trans Mountain corridor through BC to a deepwater port near Delta, including Roberts Bank, but would still require a major new pipeline, pump stations and export infrastructure.

“Certainly Canada wants to have a sovereignty that comes with having customers from many countries,” Masson said.

“And we may have to pay a cost for that.”

original proposal was cancelled. TC Energy, the company that twice tried to build Keystone XL, has since spun its oil pipeline business into a new Calgary-based company called South Bow. That company now owns the existing Keystone pipeline system, along with some assets left over from the cancelled Keystone XL project, which had been intended to expand Keystone’s capacity.

Masson said South Bow has been testing whether oil producers and refiners still want more pipeline space to the US, and that work has now taken shape as Prairie Connector, a proposed line from Hardisty, Alta. to the US border, where it would connect with Bridger’s proposed US pipeline system to carry oil farther south toward major refining and storage hubs.

South Bow has secured 20-year commitments from nine customers for 465,000 barrels per day of service to US delivery points and is targeting a final investment decision in mid-2027.

Masson said that backing shows the proposal is being driven by companies and shippers, rather than being reliant on a political push from Canada or Alberta. The proposed West Coast pipeline, by contrast, has only a 10 per cent buy-in from a private backer, with the majority of funding coming from government-owned sources.

Masson said the Canadian section of Keystone XL is relatively short and already permitted, while the remaining uncertainty sits largely in the US, where the project still faces presidential politics and opposition from environmental groups, landowners and Indigenous communities.

The project was rejected under Barack Obama, revived during Trump’s first term and cancelled again by Joe Biden in 2021. Masson said TC Energy and shippers lost more than \$1.5 billion, while Alberta lost about \$1.3 billion after backing the project in an attempt to get construction far enough along that it would be harder for a new US administration to cancel.

Trump has already issued a presidential permit for Bridger’s border-crossing facilities in Montana. But “it could still get pulled again if the pipeline is something that the next president doesn’t like,” Masson said.

A person claiming to be affected by a decision of the Development Authority may appeal to the Medicine Hat Subdivision and Development Appeal Board by completing and submitting to the City Clerk Department, the required Notice of Appeal form within twenty one (21) days of this publication. Forms available from: City Clerk Dept., 3rd Floor, City Hall or City website: www.medicinehat.ca.

All Development Permits listed are subject to conditions. For more information, contact Planning and Development Services, 2nd Floor, City Hall. Ph. (403) 529-8374.

FIRE HYDRANT INSPECTIONS & WATER MAIN FLUSHING

Environmental Utilities maintenance crews perform regular, routine maintenance to uphold the waterworks system infrastructure and water quality by annually inspecting fire hydrants and flushing water mains.

During these operations, there may be some discolouration in the water which is **not** harmful to consume and will dissipate when flushing is complete.

It is important to note that discoloured water should not be used for laundry, and that fluctuating water pressure may also be noticed.

Should discolouration persist over three hours, turn on a cold-water faucet or an outside sprinkler and let the water run for several minutes until the water runs clear.

For additional information or to confirm whether crews are working in your zone, refer to the Water Flushing information on the City’s website at www.medicinehat.ca/water or contact Environmental Utilities at 403-529-8176.

www.medicinehat.ca

The pull south

Masson said the two routes serve different purposes. A southern pipeline has the clearer com-

A modestly different proposal

Masson said the Keystone project has changed since the