Man killed in gold mining accident

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YREKA — A 62-year-old Colorado man was killed last week following an explosion in a western Siskiyou County gold mine, a spokeswoman for the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office said today.

James Steiner Bennett of Ward, Colo., died Saturday at Mercy Medical Center in Redding after he was airlifted here following the Friday night accident, said sheriff's spokeswoman Susan Gravenkamp.

She said deputies were called around 3:45 a.m. on Saturday to the Know Nothing Mine about 12 miles east of Sawyers Bar to investigate a mine explosion that occurred Friday night and seriously injured Bennett and Michael Harry Engelke, 59, of Forks of Salmon. Engelke, who was also airlifted to Mercy Medical Center, was released on Sunday.

Gravenkamp said the mine workers had placed a round of explosives in the mine and left to wait for them to detonate. They thought they heard the detonation and went back into the mine to check it, she said, adding that some of the explosives detonated while they were inside it.

The mine is owned by Gold Rush Enterprises LLC in Reno, Nevada which is a subsidiary of American Gold Corporation, Gravenkamp said.