

Collision causes power outage, driver arrested

by Cheryl McDermott

A 29-year old Bend man was arrested early this morning after he allegedly crashed his friend's pickup into a power box in a drunk-driving collision police say caused power outages to numerous homes in the northeast part of the city, and then fled the scene.

Brian Christopher Blanton - DCJ photo Bend Police were first alerted to the incident about 12:25 a.m. Tuesday when several citizens called to report hearing a loud explosion before the power to their homes went out, Sgt. Greg Owens reported.

Officers responded to the Providence subdivision and located a Central Electric Co-op (CEC) power box that was severely damaged when it was apparently struck by a vehicle. "The vehicle had fled the scene," Owens said, which was near the intersection of NE Providence Dr. and Neff Rd.

Less than an hour later, a suspect vehicle was found parked at a home several blocks away from the scene of the crash. Brian Christopher Blanton, 29, was contacted at the residence and arrested without incident.

Preliminary investigation determined that Blanton was driving a 1996 Dodge pickup owned by a friend, and Blanton was at the friend's home when he was arrested. The friend was a passenger in the pickup when the crash occurred, Owens said.

Police believe that Blanton was headed to his friend's home, traveling east on Neff Road, then lost control and struck the CEC power box as he turned onto NE Providence. He then fled and continued on to the pickup owner's house, the sergeant said.

Blanton is charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving, hit and run-property damage, and first-degree criminal mischief. He was lodged in the Deschutes County Jail.

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