

Matt Roloff's drunk driving trial begins

by Cheryl McDermott & BWNS

The long-anticipated drunk driving trial of Matt Roloff, television star of TLC's "Little People, Big World", began Tuesday in a Washington County, Oregon, Circuit Court with jury selection, opening statements, and testimony by the arresting deputy.

Matt Roloff's mug shot from his 2007 DUII arrest - WCSO photo Defense attorney Robert Thuemmel gave an opening statement, and testimony was heard from the arresting officer, Washington County Sheriff's Deputy Allen Pastori.

According to an earlier Sheriff's office news release, Roloff's Chevrolet van was observed by the deputy "failing to drive within its travel lane" on NW West Union Road near NW Cornelius Pass Road in an unincorporated area of Washington County about midnight on June 19.

Deputy Pastori said in Tuesday's court proceedings that in the 2007 incident, Roloff failed an "eye sobriety test" and was taken to jail where he refused to take a breath test. The deputy testified that he smelled a "moderate odor of alcohol" and observed that the defendant's eyes were watery and glassy, adding that Roloff displayed six of six indications of impairment commonly used by law enforcement. Roloff was subsequently cited and released for DUII (driving under the influence of intoxicants), refusing the breath test, and failure to drive within the lane.

The defense attorney suggested his client was tired, and claimed that Roloff was not driving in his lane of traffic because he was unused to driving his wife, Amy's, custom van.

Roloff admitted to having a single beer at the Rock Creek Cafe & Pub.

The trial, with a jury of six, is expected to continue at least through Wednesday.

Roloff has been charged with drunk driving before. In 2003, reports show he agreed to enter an alcohol treatment program and the charges were dropped when Roloff successfully completed the program.

The Roloff family: Matt, Amy, daughter Molly, twin sons Zach and Jeremy, and youngest child Jacob; are featured on The Learning Channel's television show that focuses on the family's life on their 33-acre farm in Oregon. Pegged by TLC as an "extraordinary family composed of both little and average-sized people", the Roloffs share how Matt, Amy, and Zach live as Little People with dwarfism in a world of normal-sized people.

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