

Four cub scouts, three others, injured in Oregon crash

by Cheryl McDermott

TOLLGATE, Ore. -- Three adults and four cub scouts were injured Saturday morning in a two-vehicle crash when a pickup fishtailed on an icy section of Highway 204 in the Blue Mountains of northeast Oregon, crossed the centerline, and was struck by another pickup, police reported.

Seven people, including four 12-year-old cub scouts from Kennewick, were injured when a pickup fishtailed on an icy section of Highway 204 in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon Saturday morning - OSP photo Oregon State Police (OSP) said a 1998 Chevrolet pickup driven by Jason Edward Pope, 33, of Kennewick, was traveling east on Highway 204 near milepost 13 in the Tollgate area when he lost control on an icy section about 8:20 a.m., February 16.

Pope's truck was rounding a right curve when it fishtailed, crossed into the oncoming lane of traffic, and was struck on the passenger side by Alan Wayne Bennett's 2001 Chevy club-cab pickup, troopers said.

Pope and his four passengers were on their way to a cub scout outing. He and Andrew Pope, Daniel Gordon, Joe Vandez and Jacob Meise, all 12-year-old boys, received reportedly non-life threatening injuries and were transported by ground ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Walla Walla.

Bennett, 59, of Imbler, Oregon, was transported by air ambulance to the same hospital with serious injuries. Bennett's wife, Julie, 62, was also injured and taken to the hospital.

All persons involved were wearing safety restraints, troopers said, adding that the airbags in Bennett's pickup deployed.

The highway was closed for four hours while OSP, Umatilla County Sheriff's deputies, Oregon Department of Transportation personnel, and EMTs with Umatilla Tribal Ambulance and Milton Freewater Ambulance assisted on scene.

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