

Four injured in Highway 20 crash near Sisters

by Cheryl McDermott

Deputies believe that excessive speed and alcohol may have contributed to a two-vehicle collision Friday night on Highway 20 just west of Sisters, Oregon that sent four people to the hospital, one with serious injuries. According to Deschutes County Sheriff's Deputy Crosswater and Lt. Utter, emergency dispatch began receiving what turned out to be multiple reports of the crash shortly after 11 p.m., February 22. Deputies, Sisters/Camp Sherman Fire District paramedics, Oregon Department of Transportation personnel and Oregon State Police troopers all responded to the scene near milepost 100 of Highway 20. Two vehicles were involved in the crash, the deputies said: a 1993 Oldsmobile Cutlass driven by 25-year old Joseph Lee Umphrey of Crooked River Ranch, and a 2003 Toyota 4-Runner driven by 39-year old Brian Layne Vajda of Portland. An investigation determined that both vehicles were traveling east toward Sisters, and Vajda was beginning to slow down from highway speed when he saw Umphrey's vehicle come up behind him quickly " just before the Oldsmobile slammed into the rear of his Toyota, causing it to roll over, crash through a fence and land next to a tree. Umphrey's Oldsmobile suffered extensive front-end damage and slowed after the impact, stopping in the middle of the highway. Umphrey was treated for reportedly minor injuries by rescue personnel and transported by ambulance to St. Charles Medical Center (SCMC) in Bend where he was admitted for observation. Vajda and two of his three passengers were all injured but able to get out of the Toyota on their own, deputies said, and another passenger was trapped and required extrication by rescue workers. Vajda and Portland residents Samuel Peters and Mary Peters, 35 and 36, were taken to SCMC. The Peters were treated and released, Lt. Utter said. The trapped passenger was identified as 40-year old Patricia Henderson of Beaverton. She was admitted to SCMC with serious injuries, the news release stated. One lane of Highway 20 was closed for about five hours during emergency response and crash reconstruction. The investigation is continuing, Lt. Utter said, adding, "speed and alcohol are both believed to be a factor in this crash".

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