

Attempt to avoid deer causes Highway 97 two-vehicle collision

by Cheryl McDermott

REDMOND, Ore. — Two drivers were sent to the hospital with minor injuries Friday morning when an attempt to avoid a dead deer in the center of Highway 97 led to a two-vehicle crash with one vehicle going airborne before rolling and sliding off the highway, and the other plummeting over an embankment, police reported.

About 7 a.m. on May 9, officers responded to the report of a rollover vehicle collision on Highway 97 near the intersection with SW Yew Avenue, Redmond Police Captain Dave Tarbet said in a news release.

Preliminary investigation determined that Ellisa Cruff, 26, was traveling south on Highway 97 when she swerved to avoid the deer, apparently overreacted, lost control and slid across the highway. Her Suzuki passenger car struck the rear of a Ford Ranger pickup, also traveling south, Tarbet said.

The pickup flew through the air, then rolled and slid across the highway before it came to rest upside down in the center median.

According to the news release, Cruff's car continued after impact, left the road, and slid a distance before plummeting over a grassy embankment onto SW Yew Avenue.

Both Cruff and the pickup's driver, 39-year old Angelia Craig, were transported to St. Charles Medical Center for treatment of reportedly minor injuries, the captain stated.

Oregon Department of Transportation personnel closed the highway for about an hour during response and investigation. Redmond Police were assisted on scene by Deschutes County Sheriff's Deputies, local emergency responders, and the U.S. Postal Service.

"No drivers were cited in the accident, and both vehicles were towed from the scene," Tarbet said.

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