

Elderly Bend woman seriously injured in Highway 97 collision

by Cheryl McDermott

BEND, Ore. — A 76-year old Bend woman was seriously injured and flown by helicopter to the hospital with life-threatening injuries after her vehicle crossed the centerline of Highway 97 south of Bend late Thursday afternoon, hit a semi-truck and trailer, then collided almost head-on with a pickup.

According to a news release prepared by Deschutes County Sheriff's Lt. Myrna Homan and Deputy Kevin Turpen, the investigation is continuing to determine the cause of the crash. "It is unknown whether alcohol or speed was involved," Homan said, adding that the driver's 2006 Toyota Highlander crossed into the oncoming lane of traffic for unknown reasons.

Deputies, Oregon State Police troopers, Sunriver Police officers, Sunriver and Bend Fire Department paramedics, Oregon Department of Transportation personnel, and Airlife of Oregon all responded to milepost 151 on Highway 97 near Lava Butte south of Bend, Oregon, about 5:30 p.m., May 15, to a reported three-vehicle crash with injuries.

Carol Gatley, 76, of Bend, was traveling south on the highway in her Toyota when it crossed the highway and crashed into a 2005 Freightliner semi-truck pulling a 53-foot box trailer, the lieutenant said. Her vehicle continued down the side of the trailer and collided with an oncoming 2004 Chevrolet pickup, crashing into it nearly head-on.

Gatley was flown by Airlife helicopter to St. Charles Medical Center (SCMC) with what deputies described as life-threatening injuries.

The driver of the semi-truck, 43-year old Carl Davis of Texas, was not injured, the news release stated.

Robert Julianus, 56, of La Pine, was operating the Chevrolet pickup and was transported to SCMC where he was treated and released.

Lt. Homan said all involved persons were wearing seat belts, and the airbags of both smaller vehicles deployed.

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