

Hail storm contributes to Highway 97 crash, two injured

by Cheryl McDermott

BEND, Ore. — Deputies believe that poor visibility and an inch of hail that was dumped on Highway 97 south of Bend when a storm passed through the area Saturday afternoon may have contributed to a two-vehicle crash that sent both drivers to the hospital with minor injuries.

The accident on Highway 97 near milepost 152 and Cottonwood Road about two miles south of the Lava Butte area was reported at 3:30 p.m., May 24, Deschutes County Sheriff's Sgt. DeLuca and Deputy Graves reported.

When deputies arrived, they found both lanes of the highway were blocked, and they remained so for about 45 minutes during emergency response and scene investigation.

Deputies believe that 73-year old Mary Kollenberg of Bend was traveling south when her 2000 Honda Accord drifted over the centerline and struck a northbound 2003 Dodge Dakota driven by Andrew Carlton, 31, of La Pine, the sergeant stated in a news release.

Kollenberg and Carlton were transported by Sunriver Fire paramedics to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend for treatment of reportedly minor injuries sustained in the crash, DeLuca and Graves said.

“Road conditions and weather conditions are believed to be factors in this crash,” Sgt. DeLuca said, adding that at the time of the collision there was one inch of hail on the roadway and visibility was poor. The investigation is continuing, however.

According to the news release, both vehicles received substantial damage but the drivers were wearing appropriate safety restraints and the airbags deployed.

Deputies were assisted on scene by the Sunriver Police and Fire Departments and Oregon Department of

Transportation personnel.

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