Calif. Family of Five Killed in Hwy. 97 Crash

by Richard Burton

A California couple and their three children died Friday afternoon in a three-vehicle crash on Highway 97 about fifteen miles south of the Diamond Lake junction, in almost the exact same location where another three-vehicle crash occurred the day before, said authorities.

The victims were identified as driver John Stephen Hanson, 43; his wife Victoria, 44, and their children Michael, 8, Elizabeth, 12, and Matthew, 10, all of Davis, California. Three others were transported for treatment of possible or minor injuries.

A California couple and their three children died in a 3-vehicle accident which occurred on Highway 97 near milepost 231 - almost the exact same location where another 3-vehicle crash occurred the day before. There were no injuries in Thursday's crash. OSP Photo The Hansonâ€™s 2004 Ford Expedition was traveling north on Highway 97 near milepost 231 when it lost control and an icy stretch and spun broadside into the oncoming lane of traffic, said Oregon State Police (OSP) in a news release. It was struck in the passenger side by a Kenworth truck towing a box trailer loaded with generators, and after impact with the semi, the Hansonâ€™s Expedition was hit again by a northbound 2002 Lincoln passenger car. The accident occurred about 2 p.m. December 29, said police.

Victoria Hanson and the three children were pronounced deceased at the scene, and the husband and father died enroute to the hospital.

The truck driver, 37-year old William M. Kuykendall of Camas, Washington, was transported to Merle West Medical Center in Klamath Falls for treatment of minor injuries.

The driver and passenger of the Lincoln, David E. Jennings, 67, and his wife Diana, 64, of Spokane, Washington, were also transported to the medical center for examination of possible injuries.

OSP have determined that all of the adults involved in the three-vehicle crash were using safety restraints. Matthew Hanson, the middle child, was also properly restrained. Michael and Elizabeth were ejected in the crash, and OSP troopers are attempting to determine if they were wearing seat belts as well.

Troopers from the Klamath Falls Area Command office are continuing the investigation. Oregon Department of Transportation personnel and local emergency responders assisted at the scene, and the highway was reopened to traffic about 6:45 p.m.

Calif. Family of Five Killed in Hwy. 97 Crash by Richard Burton