

Four victims identified in deadly Hwy. 58 crash

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

OAKRIDGE, Ore. — Four adults, two men and two women, were killed early this morning when their SUV crossed the oncoming lane of Highway 58 about five miles east of Oakridge, went off the road and became airborne when it rolled down an embankment and crashed into a large tree, crushing the passenger compartment, police reported.

The small SUV went airborne when it rolled down an embankment and crashed into a large cedar tree (above). An OSP trooper looks down upon the wreckage from Highway 58 (below). -- OSP photos

Oregon State Police (OSP) troopers have this afternoon released the identities of the deceased, previously withheld pending notification of family members, as a Springfield couple and the woman's daughter and son-in-law from Albany, Oregon.

According to an updated news release, Springfield resident Leroy Millard West, 59, was driving the 2001 Chevrolet Geo Tracker and his wife, Lanetta Kay West, 62, was in the left rear seat. Mrs. West's daughter, Paula Dianne Clary-Smith, 43, was seated next to her mother in the rear. Clary-Smith's husband, 51-year old William Ray Freeman, was in the front passenger seat.

The two couples were reportedly on a trip to Reno, Nevada, when the accident occurred. All victims were wearing seat belts, troopers said.

The crashed SUV was spotted about 6 a.m., March 23, by a commercial truck driver traveling the stretch of highway near milepost 41.

Originally Oakridge Fire and Police personnel reported there were three fatalities, but when OSP troopers arrived and began the investigation, a fourth victim was found in the wreckage, police said.

Troopers said there were some icy spots "in the general area", but it is not yet known if the ice contributed to the crash.

Oregon State Police Senior Trooper Dustin Sprague and troopers from the Oakridge work site and Springfield Area Command office are continuing the investigation with the assistance of the Lane County Medical Examiner's office, the news release stated.

Oregon Department of Transportation assisted on scene, restricting traffic to one lane of travel until the highway was reopened about 1 p.m.

Four victims identified in deadly Hwy. 58 crash by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources