Driver dies in fiery crash near Sisters

by Cheryl McDermott

SISTERS, Ore. â€“ The driver of an SUV died early this morning when the vehicle struck a utility pole and caught on fire about 3 Â½ miles east of Sisters on Highway 126 West, deputies reported.

According to a news release prepared by Deschutes County Sheriffâ€™s Sergeants Chad Davis and Mike Biondi, deputies responded to the crash near Hurtley Ranch Road about 3:40 a.m., April 3, and found a 2003 Ford Escape fully engulfed in flames.

Cloverdale Fire District firefighters extinguished the blaze, but the single occupant was discovered deceased inside the SUV, the sergeants said.

Preliminary investigation suggests the vehicle was traveling east on Highway 126 before it left the road and struck a utility pole on the north side of the highway.

It is yet unknown if speed or alcohol were factors that contributed to the crash, or if the driver was wearing a seatbelt.

The driversâ€™ identity is not being released until it is verified and family members have been notified, Davis and Biondi stated.

â€œThe utility pole was sheared off at the base,â€• the sergeants said, adding that the collision caused a power outage to Sisters and the surrounding area for several hours. The highway was also closed for several hours during the investigation and replacement of the utility pole. Oregon Department of Transportation crews established a detour around the area.

â€œThe investigation is continuing,â€• Davis and Biondi wrote in the news release.

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