

Bend man identified as driver in fatal Hwy. 126W crash

by C McDermott & BWNS

BEND, Ore. — The identity of the driver who died early Friday morning when his SUV struck a utility pole and caught fire about 3 ½ miles east of Sisters on Highway 126 West has now been released, deputies announced.

According to a news release prepared by Deschutes County Sheriff's Sergeants Chad Davis and Mike Biondi, deputies responded to the crash near Hurtlely 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, 46-year old Bend resident William David Huxel, Jr., 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 still unknown if speed or alcohol were factors that contributed to the crash, or if the driver was wearing a seatbelt. His identity was originally withheld pending notification of family members.

“The utility pole was sheared off at the base,” 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.

“The investigation is continuing,” Davis and Biondi wrote in the news release.

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