

Driver cited in Powell Butte Hwy. crash, road blocked for hours

by Cheryl McDermott

A Bend driver was cited when his truck crashed head-on into an SUV after he drifted into the oncoming lane of Powell Butte Highway in northeast Bend Friday evening, said deputies. The accident sent two people to the hospital and blocked the highway for two hours.

Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies were called to Powell Butte Highway near McGrath Road in northeast Bend about 7:45 p.m. January 5 in response to a report of an injury motor vehicle crash.

Initial investigation revealed that a 2005 Hino box-truck driven by Eric Cowell of Bend drifted into the oncoming lane of traffic and struck a red 2004 Ford Explorer head-on.

There was substantial damage to both vehicles, which were traveling at or near highway speeds, said Sgt. Joe DeLuca.

The driver and passenger of the SUV were identified as David Rowe of Redmond, and his wife Helen. The Rowe's were transported by Bend Fire emergency medical responders to St. Charles Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries. Cowell was treated at the scene and released.

Both air-bags deployed in the Ford Explorer, and all three persons involved were wearing safety restraints, said the sergeant. Alcohol was not considered a factor in the crash, he added, although the investigation is ongoing.

Cowell was cited for failing to maintain a lane of traffic and careless driving, and the highway was reopened to traffic in about two hours.

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