Two killed in Hwy. 22 crash near Mill City

by Cheryl McDermott

Two Portland-area residents were killed Thursday afternoon on Highway 22 near Mill City when their vehicle was hit by an SUV that slid out of control on black ice, Oregon State Police reported.

An off-duty medic came upon the crash scene about 100 miles northwest of Bend and reported the fatalities about 1:30 p.m.. Several Oregon State Police (OSP) units from the Salem Area Command responded to the scene of the two-vehicle accident.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Levi Wilson, 27, of Turner, Oregon slid out of control when he hit black ice on a curve of the highway, colliding with a 1999 Subaru Legacy that failed in an attempt to avoid a crash by making an evasive maneuver. Wilson's SUV then struck the Subaru on the passenger side.

Wilson, who was the sole occupant of his 2002 Toyota 4-Runner, was transported to Santiam Memorial Hospital in Stayton for treatment of minor injuries.

The two occupants of the Subaru were pronounced deceased at the scene. Their names are being withheld pending notification of family members.

Troopers say alcohol or drugs were not contributing factors to the crash. According to the news release, the area of highway where the accident took place was shaded and covered by black ice. OSP reminds motorists to use extreme caution when driving during cold weather periods, and to remember that shaded areas can be ice. Cruise control should not be used if such conditions exist, they added.