

Driver killed in Hwy. 97 truck-semi crash

by Richard Burton

A driver was killed early Monday when his flatbed pickup crossed the centerline and crashed head-on into a semi-truck south of Bend on Highway 97, Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies said.

The driver of the pickup died at the scene, said Sgt. Deron McMaster. His name is being withheld pending notification of family members.

Deputies, Oregon State Police troopers, and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) personnel responded to milepost 158 of Highway 97 about 5:30 a.m. this morning.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the victim's flatbed utility pickup was northbound on Highway 97 when it crossed the centerline and struck a southbound Sysco semi-truck driven by 49-year old Rodney Pete Abbas of Redmond. Abbas was transported by ambulance to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, said McMaster.

The semi-truck spilled diesel fuel on the highway, prompting ODOT to reroute traffic around the accident to side roads.

All lanes of the highway remained closed while the diesel spill was cleaned up, and the remaining fuel in the vehicle's tank pumped out. Sheriff's deputies expected the highway to reopen about 10:15 a.m.