

Identity of driver killed in Hwy. 97 truck-semi crash released

by Richard Burton

Deputies have released the name of the driver killed in this morning's crash on Highway 97 near milepost 158, and say that they now believe that icy road conditions may have caused the head-on accident between a flat-bed pickup and semi-truck.

The deceased has been identified as Layne J. Fugate, 34, of La Pine, Oregon. His name was earlier withheld pending notification of family members.

Fugate died at the scene of the accident 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.

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, said Sgt. Deron McMaster.

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.

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