

One killed, two injured in Highway 97 three-car collision

by Cheryl McDermott

One person was killed and two others were injured in a three-car collision on Highway 97 north of South Century Drive Sunday afternoon, deputies reported.

An 84-year old Bend man suffered fatal injuries and his wife and another driver were injured when his car crossed over the centerline into the path of an oncoming vehicle, causing a three-vehicle crash which closed the highway for two hours, Sgt. Joe DeLuca said.

The accident occurred on Highway 97 about one-quarter mile north of South Century Drive in the Sunriver area south of Bend. Law enforcement officers from the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Sunriver Police Department, and Oregon State Police; in addition to emergency personnel with Sunriver Fire & Ambulance and La Pine Rural Fire District responded to the scene about 2:40 p.m. February 11.

Marion Gilpin, 84, was southbound on Highway 97 about one-quarter mile north of South Century Drive when his 1987 Chrysler Lebaron crossed into the oncoming lane and struck a 1990 Dodge Dynasty driven by 68-year old Ronald Grigsby of Sunriver, the sergeant said.

Gilpin was extracted from his car and flown by AirLife helicopter to St. Charles Medical Center (SCMC) in Bend where he later died of his injuries.

Gilpin's wife Elizabeth, also 84, and Grigsby were removed from their vehicles with the "jaws of life" extrication tool and transported by ground ambulance to SCMC.

A third vehicle, a 2003 Jeep Liberty driven by 35-year old Martin Blackhurst of Portland, received minor damage when it was unable to avoid the collision and struck one of the vehicles, the sergeant said. Blackhurst and his passenger, Lori Wehrl, 34, of Wilwaukie, were not injured.

The accident investigation is ongoing, Deluca said.

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