

Wrong-way driver killed on I-5 near Salem

by Cheryl McDermott

In a few short minutes prior to a head-on fatal collision between a car and a semi-truck on I-5 south of Salem early Friday morning, at least 18 people called police to report a wrong-way driver on the interstate highway.

Oregon State Police (OSP) dispatch received the first of eight calls within a two-minute period, and Marion County emergency 911 dispatch received at least 10 similar calls, police reported.

A driver traveling the wrong-way on Interstate 5 near Salem was killed when he collided head-on with a semi-truck early Friday morning. OSP photos.

Marion County Sheriff's deputies were first on scene as OSP troopers were called in from off-duty status to respond to the accident scene near milepost 247 about 3:30 a.m. February 23. The only trooper in the area on duty at the time was involved in a shooting investigation.

Troopers determined that 45-year old Kevin C. Renfrow of Aberdeen, Washington was driving south in the northbound lanes in his 2000 Chrysler 300 sedan for several miles before he collided with a commercial truck in the center of three lanes. Renfrow was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The truck driver, an employee of Petroleum Cargo Carriers of Portland, was using safety restraints and was not injured. OSP identified him as Mark W. Presley, 45, of Albany.

Troopers from the Salem Area Command, with the assistance of an OSP crash reconstructionist, are continuing the investigation. According to a news release, alcohol is being investigated as a possible contributing factor. Oregon Department of Transportation assisted at the scene and established a detour for northbound traffic at Exit 246 until one lane of traffic was reopened about 5 a.m.

In addition to assistance provided by Marion County Sheriff's deputies, Keizer Police, Turner Fire, and Chaplain Crisis Services also responded.

Wrong-way driver killed on I-5 near Salem by Cheryl McDermott