

La Pine man dies in Highway 26 collision

by Cheryl McDermott

A La Pine-area man died Sunday afternoon when he collided with a semi-truck after attempting to pass another commercial vehicle in a "no passing" zone on Highway 26 about 25 miles east of Government Camp on the Warm Springs Reservation, Oregon State Police (OSP) reported.

Warm Springs Police first responded to the scene with local emergency medical personnel about 2:30 p.m. March 4. OSP troopers were requested to conduct an investigation into the crash about 3:10 p.m.

A La Pine man was killed Sunday when his Toyota pickup collided nearly head-on with a semi-truck and trailer on Highway 26 "OSP photo
Vern Robert Thompson, Jr., 66, of La Pine, was traveling east on Highway 26 near milepost 80 in a Toyota pickup when he attempted to pass an International truck and trailer in a "no passing" zone, troopers said.

Thompson's pickup crashed nearly head-on with another semi truck and trailer that was just rounding a curve. After colliding with the second semi-truck, the pickup was struck by the International truck it was attempting to pass, then left the highway, rolled, and came to rest upside-down on the highway. Thompson was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The drivers of the commercial trucks, Joseph Lee Cutberth, 38, of Roy, Washington, and Ronnie E. Jones, 59, of Terrebonne, were not injured.

Oregon Department of Transportation personnel assisted with traffic control on the two-lane section of highway where the accident occurred, troopers said. One lane was used to shuttle both directions of traffic through the area, reopening the highway about 5:30 p.m.

OSP crash reconstructionists plan on returning to the scene today to continue the investigation.

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