

Burning truck trailer closes Hwy. 20 east of Bend

by Cheryl McDermott

Oregon State police announced this morning that Highway 20E about 60 miles east of Bend near Hampton has reopened following a nearly six-hour closure prompted by a fire burning a semi-truck trailer loaded with cardboard.

Hwy. 20E about 60 miles east of Bend was shut down for hours when a trailer full of cardboard bound for recycling caught fire - OSP photos According to a news release, a Kenworth truck towing a flatbed semi-trailer was traveling west on Highway 20E near milepost 58 when, for unknown reasons, a fire began on the trailer about 10:15 p.m.

The driver, Michael J. Asbury, 30, who was hauling the large bale-like bundles of cardboard from Idaho to Springfield for recycling, noticed the flames and was able to separate the trailer from the truck before the truck caught fire.

Troopers report that Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) personnel used a bulldozer to remove the burning cardboard from the trailer, and also moved the damaged trailer to the side of the highway. Because the fire was not within Deschutes or Harney County fire districts, ODOT responded with a water truck.

The load continued to burn on the shoulder until this morning, closely monitored by ODOT and Bureau of Land Management personnel, until it was towed to Burns.

All lanes of traffic were closed for about six hours, with one lane reopening about 5 a.m. this morning.

A truck inspection by an OSP trooper didn't turn up any violations, and no citations were issued.

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