

Two injured in head-on crash near Coburg

by Cheryl McDermott

One driver was critically injured and another received non-life threatening injuries in a two-vehicle crash north of Coburg, Oregon Monday afternoon when an SUV crossed the median of Interstate-5 and collided with a car head-on, police reported.

A helicopter ambulance (above) lands on I-5 to evacuate the critically injured driver of a car hit head-on by an SUV (below) that apparently crossed the median for unknown reasons - OSP photos Preliminary investigation by Oregon State Police (OSP) determined that a 1996 Ford Explorer driven by 41-year old Robert L. Connell of Portland was traveling north on I-5 about 4 p.m. when, for unknown reasons, it crossed the median and crashed head-on into an oncoming car.

The driver of the car, a 2005 Chevrolet Impala, was transported by REACH air ambulance to Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene in reportedly critical condition. After initially withholding her name pending notification of family members, police later identified her as 25-year old Sarah Rebekah Stokes of Albany.

According to the OSP news release, Connell was transported to Sacred Heart by ground ambulance with non-life threatening injuries.

After impact, both vehicles came to rest off the west side of the freeway. Southbound lanes were closed for about 40 minutes to allow the helicopter to land, troopers said, with traffic restricted to one lane only for about two hours until the freeway was reopened about 6:10 p.m.

Troopers from the Albany Area Command office are continuing the investigation, and were aided on scene by an OSP crash reconstructionist and troopers with the Springfield Office. Other on scene assistance was provided by Springfield Fire and Rescue members, and Halsey-Shedd Fire Department.

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