

Driver cited, three injured in Prineville crash

by Cheryl McDermott

A driver, distracted as he reached into the backseat of his car for a lighter, sideswiped another vehicle as he traveled 60 mph and was cited for failing to maintain a lane of travel in a collision that sent three people to the hospital with minor injuries, deputies reported.

Crook County Sheriff's deputies and Prineville Ambulance paramedics responded to the scene at milepost 1 on Juniper Canyon Road in Prineville about 6:45 p.m., Wednesday, July 4, Sgt. Jim Chapman wrote in a news release.

Investigation determined that Wade Miller, 22, of Madras, was reaching into the back seat of his 1997 Chevy Geo so he could light a cigarette when he drove into the oncoming lane of traffic, sideswiping a 2002 Dodge Neon driven by 20-year old Yelena Petrukhnova of Prineville.

According to a passenger in Petrukhnova's vehicle, if she had not swerved, the two vehicles would have collided head-on.

Two of three passengers in Miller's car received minor injuries and were taken to Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Teresa Larson, 17, was transported by ambulance and Joseph Kimball, 26, was taken by a private vehicle, Chapman said. Both are Madras residents.

Petrukhnova was also taken by ambulance to the hospital with reportedly non life-threatening injuries. Her passenger, 24-year old Prineville resident Brett Hisle, was not hurt.

Alcohol was not a factor in the crash, the sergeant said, but Miller was cited for failing to maintain a lane of travel.

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