

Bend cop on "administrative duty" following high-speed pursuit, arrest

by Cheryl McDermott & BWNS

A 12-year veteran of the Bend Police Department was placed on administrative duty Tuesday following his arrest when he allegedly led Oregon State Police (OSP) on a high-speed pursuit in the Santiam Pass area after troopers clocked him riding his motorcycle " with his teenage daughter as a passenger -- at more than 25 mph over the speed limit.

Officer "Buck" Church (inset - LCJ photo), and his Yamaha 1300-cc motorcycle after the pursuit on the Santiam Pass (OSP photo) Bend Police Chief Andy Jordan said Officer Buckley "Buck" Duane Church II will work in the offices of the Bend Police Department and will not be assigned to routine patrol duty. This assignment will remain in effect until the department's internal investigation is completed and the criminal investigation is completed.

According to a news release issued by OSP, troopers and Linn County Sheriff's deputies were conducting an interagency traffic safety enforcement patrol in the Santiam Pass area on Friday. About 4:40 p.m., an OSP sergeant was on Highway 126 near milepost 2 when he saw Church and his daughter traveling east. OSP Sgt. Flierl obtained a radar reading of 81-mph in a 55-mph zone, turned his marked Dodge Charger around, and saw the motorcycle quickly speed off.

The trooper attempted to overtake the cycle, a 2005 Yamaha FJR 1300cc, but the driver passed in a no-passing zone before merging onto Highway 20. The trooper pursued with emergency lights and siren, the release stated.

Witnesses later told police they thought the motorcycle was going to crash due to its high speed. "The motorcycle may have passed 7 to 11 vehicles in this area at speeds believed to be in excess of 100-mph," the OSP release stated. Troopers are seeking witnesses that were in any of these vehicles.

The motorcycle eventually stopped on Highway 20 near milepost 73 following the 2 ½ mile pursuit, and the driver was identified as Church, 38, troopers said. He was taken into custody and lodged in the Linn County Jail, charged with felony attempt to elude a police officer, reckless driving, and recklessly endangering another person. Church was also cited for violation of the basic rule, to wit: 81-mph in a 55-mph speed zone, and unlawful pass in a no passing zone.

Church's 16-year-old daughter who was a passenger on the motorcycle was released to her stepmother, troopers said.

"The criminal investigation is being conducted by the Oregon State Police and the internal investigation by the Bend Police Department," Bend Police Captain Andy Jordan wrote in a news release.

According to Jordan, Church has been with Bend Police for 12 years, serving as a patrol officer, detective and currently a K-9 handler. He previously was a patrol officer for Florence Police. "He has received many commendations including a department lifesaving award, and has also been very active in community

service,â€• the Chief said.

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