

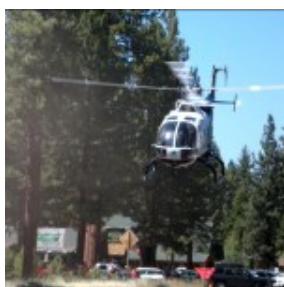
4-car accident sends 3 to hospital, closes Hwy. 50

Updated Aug. 14, 2010, 9:20am: *The person flown to Renown Medical Center has been discharged from the hospital.*

By Kathryn Reed

Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe was closed for a couple hours Wednesday afternoon after a suspected drunken driver caused a four-car accident that sent three people to the hospital.

Eric Acri, 50, of South Lake Tahoe was booked into Lake Tahoe Jail on suspicion of felony drunken driving after the 1:39pm accident near Lake Tahoe Pizza Company.



CalStar takes an accident victim from South Lake Tahoe to Reno on Aug. 11.

This was the second of what would become three DUI crashes in the city limits in 31 hours.

Debris was scattered across the highway between D and F streets, as metal was crunched, airbags deployed and the jaws of life used to extricate the most seriously injured person. CalStar crews landed in the middle of the highway to have a

faster transport time to Renown Medical Center in Reno.

Names of the three injured people were not released, but witnesses said they believe they are South Lake Tahoe residents.

Acri was driving toward Lake Tahoe Airport when his vehicle sideswiped a Toyota, taking off the side mirror, according to South Lake Tahoe police Officer Jake Herminhaus. He then rear-ends a vehicle, which causes that truck to swerve and spin into oncoming traffic, T-boning a GMC Sierra, Herminhaus said.

It was the driver of the small truck that hit the GMC who was airlifted to Reno. First crews had to cut off the driver side door to reach him.

Bonita Christensen, who is staying at the Silver Shadows Motel, said she helped two women get out of the GMC.

"They said they saw the car come over the line and tried to dodge it," Christensen said. "It was so loud and horrific. Dust was flying."

The impact was so great the left rear tire was several feet from where the GMC stopped.

Traffic was diverted on Bonanza Avenue for a couple hours while investigators did their work and then the cleanup began.

After that accident, South Tahoe officers responded to a DUI crash at Alma Street and Sierra Boulevard at 5:11pm. Nicholas Dellavin, 27, of South Lake Tahoe was arrested on driving under the influence charges. There were no injuries in the two-car accident.

On Aug. 10 officers arrested Nicola Foster, 34, of South Lake Tahoe on DUI charges after she allegedly did serious damage to three parked cars and a mailbox on Ruby Way between Wildwood Avenue and Ski Run Boulevard.

A citizen cut-off the vehicle and then officers arrived.

“The crashes, they are once in a while. We get two or three DUI arrests every day, but not crashes,” Sgt. Jeff Reagan said.

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