

SLTPD officer and 2 others killed in auto wreck



South Lake Tahoe Police Officer Mark Hounsell and Argo in 2011. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

An eight-year veteran with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department died Oct. 17 in a single-vehicle rollover accident near Fallon.

Officer Mark Hounsell, 42, was driving to their home in Minden when the Chevrolet Suburban for unknown reasons left the road and rolled several times. The accident occurred about 5pm, approximately 20 miles east of Fallon.

Also killed in the crash were Hounsell's wife, Jeanne, 34, and their friend Laura Fisher, 33, of Washington, Ill. Seat belts were worn by all, according to the Nevada Highway Patrol.

In the vehicle were the Hounsells four children who are

between the ages of 4 and 14. The injuries they sustained are not life threatening.

Hounsell was a K9 officer for part of his tenure with South Tahoe, most of his time was spent on patrol. Prior to being hired in May 2007 by SLTPD he had worked for the Douglas County Sheriff's Department.

"One of the things I appreciated about Mark was the thoroughness of his work," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*. "He loved what he was doing. It's not uncommon for our patrol officers to do deeper work than normal. Mark took it to another level."

When tourists were arriving in town to find their vacation rental they booked was bogus and they had no lodging, it was Hounsell who traced the origins of the criminals to foreign countries and then back to Colorado.

"You could sense from him that he really didn't like people being victims of criminal acts and he would go the distance to find the suspects," Uhler said.

Mark Hounsell's parents, who are from Southern California, arrived in Northern Nevada on Sunday and met with Uhler. He said they conveyed to him how proud their son was to be working for SLTPD and how much he enjoyed his job.

They will be meeting with members of the department and LifePoint Church clergy on Monday to plan the services.

"Our police officers and unsworn staff all feel like they want to help in some way shape and form. It's a difficult time because there is not a lot that can be done. There is a certain feeling of helplessness and a great sense of loss," Uhler said.

Flags at the city's police and fire stations are being flown at half staff.