



Fatal accident on U.S. 95

JEFF SELLE/Staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 12:00 am

COEUR d'ALENE - A head-on collision resulted in the death of one person, and closed Highway 95 at the Spokane River Bridge for several hours Tuesday.

According to Idaho State Police, at 11:21 a.m. a 1997 Jeep Wrangler driven by Stephen L. Pedersen, 60, of Hayden Lake, was traveling northbound on 95 and crossed the center line about halfway across the Spokane River Bridge and struck a southbound 2014 Ford F250 pickup driven by Leonard G. Hammrich, 74, of Coeur d'Alene head-on.

Pedersen died at the scene, and Hammrich, whose condition was undetermined at press time, was transported to Kootenai Health.

"The Jeep looked like it just dove right under that pickup, and the truck went right over the top of it," said UPS Driver Chris Stafford, who was two car lengths behind the wreck.

He said shortly after everything came to a stop, a small fire erupted in a third vehicle that was involved in the crash.

After Hammrich's vehicle struck the Jeep, it veered off into the northbound lane and struck a 1995 GMC pickup truck driven by Adam D. Jacobson, 35, of Jacobson Tree Service in Coeur d'Alene.

Jacobson said he was following the driver of the Jeep, who was swerving all over the road and eventually just swerved in front of Hammrich's vehicle.

"I thought he was going to miss me, but he hit me and spun me right around," said Jacobson, whose pickup was pushed against the guardrail of the bridge. He was uninjured.

A police report said the accident was still under investigation. Both Jacobson and Hammrich were wearing their seat belts, but Pedersen was not.

The highway closure affected the Coeur d'Alene School District's ability to transport students home after school. Bus routes 23, 24, 25 and 27 were impacted. Students who ride those buses and live south of the Spokane River Bridge were picked up from LCHS and Lakes Middle School at the regular end of school day at 2:30 p.m.

Those students were transported to Winton Elementary School, where they stayed in a brief holding pattern until elementary students could be picked up at 3:30 p.m.

The bridge was re-opened at 3:01 p.m. allowing the buses to transport the students home.