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MEDIA RELEASE

North Dakota Highway Patrol
374 34 St S, Ste A, Fargo, ND 58103



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

3/31/2019

Sergeant Thomas Herzig
(701) 328-1081

Triple Fatal Crash – Cass Co. Rd. 10 Near Tower City

What: Fatal Crash involving three fatalities, three injuries and one arrest

Where: Cass Co. Rd. 10 – ¾ of a mile east of Tower City

When: March 29th, 2019 at approximately 11:38 pm

Road Conditions: Normal spring driving conditions, dry roads

Weather Conditions: Clear

Crash Involvement: Three vehicles involved, two separate crashes

Type of Crash: Head-On

Agencies Involved: NDHP, Ransom SO, Barnes SO, Cass SO, Buffalo 1st Responders, Sanford Life Flight, Casselton Ambulance, Cass County Coroner

Vehicle No. 1: 2005 Lincoln Aviator

Driver No. 1: 16 YOA Sophia Weshnevski of Buffalo, ND – serious injuries

Restraints: Airbag deployed, seatbelt use at this time is unknown

Charges: Driver is a juvenile, if charged, those charges will not be released.

Vehicle No. 2: 2011 Ford Econoline Van

Driver No. 2: 40 YOA Matthew Wipf of Tower City, ND, deceased

Restraints: Unknown as this time

Charges: None

Passenger No. 1: 50 YOA Henry Decker of Ipswich, SD, injured, front seat passenger

Restraints: Unknown at this time

The Vision Zero Traffic Safety Initiative is a multi-agency partnership working toward the goal of zero motor vehicle fatalities and serious injuries on North Dakota roads.



Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.



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Passenger No. 2: 43 YOA Kathy Wipf of Tower City, ND, deceased – rear seat passenger
Restraints: Unknown at this time

Passenger No. 3: 46 YOA Dorothy Decker of Ipswich, SD, deceased – rear seat passenger
Restraints: Unknown at this time

Passenger No. 4: 35 YOA Heidi Hoffer of Ipswich, SD, injured – rear seat passenger
Restraints: Unknown at this time

Vehicle No. 3: 2003 Ford F150

Driver No. 3: John Wurtz, 37 YOA male, Utica, SD - uninjured

Restraints: Unknown as this time

Charges: DUI, Possession of Marijuana

NARRATIVE: The Lincoln, driven by Sophia Weshnevski, was eastbound on Cass County Road 10 east of Tower City. The Lincoln crossed over the center line of the roadway. After crossing over the center line, the Lincoln struck the Ford Econoline head on. Both vehicles came to rest across both lanes of Co. Rd. 10. Traffic was re-routed for approximately five hours while first responders and law enforcement processed the crash scene. Ms. Weshnevski was flown to a Fargo Hospital with serious injuries. The driver of the Ford Econoline, Matthew Wipf, was pronounced dead on scene. Two passengers in the Ford Econoline van, Kathy Wipf and Dorothy Decker, were also killed in the crash. Henry Decker and Heidi Hoffer were also passengers in the Ford Econoline who suffered injuries and were transported to Sanford Hospital in Fargo.

A short time after the initial crash, 37 YOA John Wurtz, Utica, SD, crashed his 2003 F150 into the Aviator. Wurtz was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence and Possession of Marijuana. He was uninjured.

Both crashes remain under investigation by the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

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