

## Driver of Stolen Vehicle Killed in Columbia County Sheriff's Pursuit

Monday, 05 July 2010 06:24 -

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The driver of a stolen motor vehicle was killed Sunday night after a Columbia County Sheriff's deputy attempted to stop the car and an 18-mile pursuit ensued. The suspect vehicle crashed in an apparent effort by the driver to avoid a spike strip on the roadway, resulting in a vehicle fire

. The deputy and an officer from the Vernonia Police Department

pulled a passenger from the wrecked car

, but the driver could not be rescued before the vehicle became engulfed in flames. The crash occurred on Scappoose-Vernonia Rd, approximately three miles east of the Nehalem River Highway.

The pursuit began a little after 9:00 Sunday evening

when a deputy observed the suspect vehicle operating near Brinn and Pittsburg roads. The vehicle matched the description of a stolen vehicle reported to have eluded Scappoose

police the day before. As the deputy attempted to overtake the suspect vehicle, the driver of the stolen car sped up, and the chase was on.

The pursuit lasted 15 minutes and traveled approximately 16 miles. Speeds got as high as 80 miles per hour on the route beginning at Sykes Rd and West Kappler, continuing on Cater Rd before heading west on Scappoose-Vernonia Rd. During the pursuit the suspect was observed throwing debris out the driver side window in an apparent effort to create obstacles for the pursuing deputy. Items thrown from the vehicle included, "The Club" (anti-theft device), large fencing staples, a gasoline can, and even a pair of pants. The suspect drove the stolen car approximately 10 miles on Scappoose-Vernonia Rd. before a Vernonia Police Officer

deployed spike strips in an effort to deflate one or more of the suspect vehicle's tires.

It appeared that the driver of the stolen car attempted to avoid the spike strip, lost control of the vehicle and left the roadway, where it burst into flames. The pursuing deputy and the Vernonia

Police officer responded quickly to the burning vehicle and were able to pull the passenger from the flames. The car quickly became engulfed, making further rescue attempts impossible.

The passenger was taken by Lifelight Helicopter

to Emanuel Hospital with life-threatening injuries. The driver was declared dead at the scene. Currently we do not have positive identification of either the passenger or the driver.

The vehicle, a 1989 Nissan 240SX was reported stolen to Portland Police on June 26.

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Columbia County Sheriff's Office requested the assistance of an Oregon State Police crash reconstructionist. The state police will be handling the investigation of the crash.