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January 01, 2012

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Media Release

Pedestrian Killed on US Highway 50 near Stateline Shortly After Midnight

On Sunday, January 1, 2012 at approximately 12:44 am, troopers from the Nevada Highway Patrol were dispatched to an accident on US Highway 50 near Stateline, just east of Lake Village Parkway, involving a pedestrian who was struck and killed. This section of US 50 in Douglas County is a four-lane highway with east and west bound travel lanes separated by a double-yellow line and the posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour.

The information investigated so far indicates a 21-year-old Walnut Creek, California man was walking in the left eastbound travel lane wearing denim jeans and a black jacket. Traveling east in the same lane approaching the pedestrian was a 2011 Ford Expedition California Highway Patrol vehicle driven by Officer Joshua J. Varanini, 38 of Truckee. Evidence at the scene shows Officer Varanini applied the brakes of his SUV and steered the vehicle to the right to avoid striking the walker. The left front portion of the patrol vehicle struck the man who was forced into the opposing westbound travel lane. A white 1998 Ford E-450 two-axle passenger shuttle bus traveling westbound and driven by 38-year-old James L. Eastland of Sparks could not avoid striking the pedestrian. The downed pedestrian was stuck by the undercarriage of the shuttle van. There were no passengers riding on the bus and the drivers of both vehicles were not injured.

The pedestrian was pronounced deceased at the scene and troopers from the Nevada Highway Patrol-- Major Accident Investigation Team will be investigating this tragedy. Once we are confident that his next-of-kin have been officially notified, we will release his name. The accident forced the closure of the highway for almost four hours. Eastbound traffic was rerouted out of the area via State Route 207, Kingsbury Grade, while westbound traffic was turned around near the scene. The highway was completely reopened at approximately 4:36 am.

Witnesses or anyone with additional information regarding this tragedy should contact Trooper Eric Gallagher at (775) 689-4661 regarding case number NHP-120100102.

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