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Media Release

Lane Departure Crash in Sparks Involved 3 Vehicles and Injured 4 Motorists

On Friday, March 15, 2013 at approximately 7:49 am, troopers from the Nevada Highway Patrol were dispatched to a crash on Interstate 80 in Sparks near the Sparks Boulevard off ramp interchange involving three vehicles. The preliminary crash investigation details indicate a burgundy 1997 Chevrolet Blazer SUV and a gray 2006 Lexus RX400h SUV were both parked on the eastbound right-hand shoulder. The Lexus was positioned behind the Blazer.

Earlier in the hour, the driver of the Blazer, 18-year-old Matthew H. Simpson of Sparks and his passenger, 17-year-old Carissa Leone, ran out of gas and parked the disabled Blazer on the right shoulder of the Interstate. Matthew telephoned his mother, 42-year-old Annemarie Simpson of Sparks, to bring him some fuel. When Ms. Simpson arrived and parked, she exited her vehicle with a container of gasoline and handed it to her son while Carissa remained seated in the vehicle. Matthew began pouring the fuel into the empty tank while his mother stood directly next to him. While the refueling process was being completed, a third vehicle described as a white 2000 Chrysler convertible was traveling eastbound on the freeway in the far right lane approaching their location.

The driver of the Chrysler allowed his vehicle to depart the travel lane where it struck the left rear portion of the Lexus. The force of the collision pushed the Lexus forward where it struck the rear of the Blazer. Ms Simpson heard the initial collision and attempted to run toward the far right side of the shoulder directly behind the Blazer, but was struck and pinned between the two SUVs. Her son Matthew was knocked down to the pavement by his own vehicle when it was struck. The Chrysler did not drive over Matthew during the chain of events and the errant vehicle came to rest slightly ahead of the Blazer.

All four involved-motorists were transported to Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno by REMSA personnel. Ms. Simpson sustained very serious injuries while the other three had injuries ranging from very minor to serious.

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The driver of the Chrysler was identified by his passport as 22-year-old Ismael Ramirez-Lopez with a possible Reno address. Troopers are interviewing him with the assistance of an interpreter at the hospital to learn more about the crash and to hopefully determine why he allowed the vehicle he was operating to depart its lane. He is cooperating with investigators.

The crash caused the temporary closure of the far right lane of Interstate 80 near the crash scene for about three hours so investigators could capture the roadway evidence and complete their on-scene portion of the investigation. The lane was re-opened a few minutes after 11:00 am.

Trooper Scott Morron of the Major Accident Investigation Team is investigating this crash. Witnesses or anyone with additional information should contact him at smorron@dps.state.nv.us or (775) 689-4625 regarding case number NHP-130314329.



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