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Truckers catch driver of alleged hit-and-run

■ **COLLISION:** Tacoma man sideswipes bus of a high school basketball team

MEDFORD (AP) — Truckers using their CB radios helped catch a driver accused of drunken driving and hit-and-run after a collision with a bus carrying a high school basketball team.

No one was hurt Tuesday night when a car sideswiped the bus on Interstate 5 near Grants Pass. The bus was carrying the boy's basketball team and cheerleaders from Cascade Christian

High School to Jacksonville after a game in Glendale, state police said.

With the help of three truckers using CB radios, officers arrested Milford Bickford of Tacoma, Wash., at the Gold Hill off ramp on Interstate 5, 10 miles from where he hit the bus.

Other charges against Bickford include 20 counts of reckless endangerment, driving while with a suspended license and having an open container of alcohol in the car, officers said.

He was jailed in Medford.

DEQ requires Smith's plant to fix unsafe waste system

■ **ENVIRONMENT:** State says Smith's company is responsible for four pollution spills since 1993

PORTLAND (AP) — The state is requiring the frozen food company owned by U.S. Senate candidate Gordon Smith to fix its waste-water system to stop recurring spills, *The Oregonian* reported today.

Smith Frozen Foods Inc. must comply with the state Department of Environmental Quality requirement to renew its water quality permit.

The DEQ action is the latest enforcement step in the agency's efforts to stop pollution at the Pendleton-area company, which Smith bought 15 years ago.

The Smith Frozen Foods plant, which employs about 800 people, has spilled waste into creeks four times since 1993.

"The pattern suggests it's outdated and needs more attention," said Ed Liggett, DEQ environmental specialist. "We have not typically had permit conditions requiring specific improvements. So it's going to be a slightly different approach."

Liggett, who is responsible for 100 of the more than 3,000 water

quality permits that DEQ monitors statewide, said it is only the second time he has taken such action against a company in the four years he has worked in Eastern Oregon.

"We went above and beyond what was in a normal permit," Liggett said.

Smith said he welcomes the DEQ requirements.

"I am anxious for their input and willing to comply," Smith said. "They have a job to do, which is to enforce the environmental laws of Oregon, and I have no conflict with those laws but a desire to comply."

The plant has had two major pollution problems since Smith purchased it.

One involved leaks from waste-water ponds. It was fixed in 1987 with the help of \$766,000 in government grants.

A second involves waste-water spills directly into nearby creeks, mainly from broken pipes and equipment failures. The biggest, in 1991, killed thousands of fish and drew a \$75,000 fine, the second largest in state history.

Smith challenged the fine and reached a settlement. His company paid a \$25,000 fine, \$25,000 to enhance Pine Creek and \$100,000 for plant improvements.

Extra time added to winter break balances term lengths to 10 weeks

By Regina Brown
Higher Education Reporter

Contrary to popular belief, the 1995-96 school year is not a week longer than last year.

Spring term will end June 14, a week later than last year because an extra week was added to winter break, University registrar Herb Cherek said.

The Oregon State Board of Higher education added the extra week so winter term would not begin in the middle of the week, Cherek said.

According to Cherek, when class starts in the middle of the week professors lose valuable teaching time.

In addition, the number of

weeks in fall, winter and spring terms has been modified so each has 10 weeks.

In past years, fall term had 11 weeks, winter term had nine and spring term had 10, said Gary Christensen, assistant vice chancellor for student services and academic affairs.

"Our purpose was to even the distribution of teaching days," he said.

This also creates fewer problems for professors, Christensen said.

"I think the faculty finds it much more conducive to teaching," he said.

Also, summer term will begin on June 24, a week later than last year.

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