



THREE INJURED IN KERBY - Lawmen are looking for Kerby resident Michael Heikka, 41, identified as the driver of a northbound Mercedes on Hwy. 199 in Kerby near Kerby Trailer Park that drifted into a southbound SUV Sunday, Sept. 4, said Oregon State Police. The SUV went off the west shoulder, into a ditch and rolled over once, said OSP. It was driven by Cave Junction resident Robert Hanni, 40. Transported with apparent minor injuries were Cheri Miller, Sierra Hanni, and Cole Hanni, according to an unofficial report. (Photos by 'Illinois Valley News')



Californian river victim

A California man died of apparent drowning in a rafting accident near Galice on Sunday, Sept. 4, said Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO).

The victim was identified as Dennis Rodriguez, 57, town unavailable. He and his son, who was not named, were rafting in one-person Tahiti craft, when the victim's capsized.

Other rafters went to help, as did the son. CPR was in progress when rescue personnel arrived after the 12:24 p.m. call.

Rodriguez was wearing a flotation device, said JCSO, but "it was not properly secured and came up over his head."

American Medical Response took the man to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass, where he succumbed to his condition and was pronounced dead, said JCSO.



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I can't hear ya, Bert. I've got a banana in my ear.

- Ernie -

Simple rule: Slow it down driving in a school zone

Don't worry -- this isn't a test. And you don't need to memorize anything.

But Oregon's school zone speed law is becoming easier to follow for the 2005-06 school year under current law, and for the 2006-07 school year, when changes made by the 2005 Legislature will take effect.

One simple rule of thumb will always work: Follow signs, and when in doubt, slow down.

"For this school year, 2005-06, the current law stays in effect," said Sue Riehl, Youth Program Manager for the Oregon Dept. of Transportation's Safety Division. "The law requires drivers to obey the 20 mph speed limit in schools zones where flashing lights and signs indicate."

House Bill 2840, signed by the Governor on July 20, will take effect July 1, 2006 -- in time for the 2006-07 school year.

The revised law still will require drivers to slow to 20 mph in school zones where flashing lights and signs indicate children may be arriving at or leaving school.

What will change next year is that if a school zone has no flashing lights, the 20 mph speed limit will apply only from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on days when classes are in session.

"Now that summer is nearly over, drivers commuting to work need to again start playing extra

attention to children rushing to school," Riehl said. "Children are more difficult to see beyond parked cars, and they can dart out into traffic or misjudge when it's safe to cross a street."

Still want to get a head start on studying the new law for next year?

"Remember your ABCs when it comes to school zones," Riehl said. "Drive 20 mph: A- Any time a yellow light on a school speed sign is flashing; B- Between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on school days, as posted on signs in a school zone adjacent to school grounds; and C- Crosswalks not adjacent to school grounds also require a 20 mph limit.

"This means where children are waiting at a crosswalk or occupying or walking within a crosswalk, or a traffic patrol member is present to assist children at a crosswalk."

But if drivers simply follow the signs, both this year and next, they will do their part to keep children safe. Driving just 5 mph more than the 20 mph speed limit increases the risk of hitting a child and increases the severity of the injury when a child is struck by a vehicle, Riehl said.

"Slowing down anytime children are near the street or at a crosswalk can help prevent a tragic situation for a driver and a child," Riehl said. "And slowing down is the best way to avoid an expensive ticket."

School district meetings slated

An executive (closed to the public) session to discuss a personnel matter will be conducted by directors of Three Rivers School District Monday, Sept. 12 at 6 p.m. at the district office, 8550

New Hope Road in rural Grants Pass.

Directors also are scheduled to meet in regular session Monday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. at Hidden Valley High School.

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