



Photo courtesy of OSP

A 26-CAR PILEUP on I-84 east of Baker City left 12 people with injuries and sent four people to the hospital early Saturday morning. The crash was still under investigation as of press time, but was believed to have been caused by black ice.

Twelve injured in Interstate 84 crash in eastern Oregon

BAKER CITY, Ore. (AP) — Black ice is believed to be the cause of a freeway pileup involving more than a dozen tractor-trailers that left 12 people injured Saturday in eastern Oregon, police said.

The 26-vehicle pileup left a long stretch of Interstate 84 closed for most of the day as crews worked to clean spilled diesel fuel and clear away dozens of vehicles that were either damaged or stranded.

Twelve people were treated for injuries at a Baker City hospital, with four of them then going to other hospitals with more serious injuries, Oregon State Police Sgt. Kyle Hove said. Police had initially reported just four people hurt. There were no fatalities.

The crash occurred shortly before 5 a.m. east of Baker City, about 130 miles northwest of Boise, Idaho.

Hove arrived on the scene to find "a sheet of ice" on the roadway. Troopers are still investigating, but Hove said he believes it was a chain-reaction crash.

"A couple of the trucks came upon the black ice, and they jackknifed and crashed into each other. And it just continued to escalate," Hove told The Associated Press by phone.

Authorities updated their report hours after the crash, increasing the number of vehicles directly involved from 20 to 26, and saying that the pileup left 50 to 70 vehicles stranded at the scene.

There were several separate collisions over a stretch of about three-quarters of a mile in the eastbound lanes, Hove said. He said many of the damaged vehicles were tractor-trailers, and several spilled their loads.

Two trucks were transporting hazardous materials. Their cargo did not spill, but crews had to clean up diesel from the trucks' fuel tanks.

"We understand it's frustrating when the freeway is closed like this," said Tom Strandberg, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "Our primary concern is safety, and (we)

want to make sure everything is cleared by our hazmat folks before we let any traffic through the areas."

I-84 links Salt Lake City with Portland, Oregon, and is the primary east-west highway through eastern Oregon. The eastbound lanes were closed for several hours but officials said at least one lane was reopening Saturday night. Westbound lanes were closed temporarily near the crash site.

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Mt. Hood NF recognized for 'Wild' film

On Jan. 6, Governor John Kitzhaber presented an Oregon Film & Television Office's Annual Governor's Award in the category of "Film Advocate," to the Mt. Hood National Forest for its involvement and support of the filming of the major motion picture, "Wild." Forest staff being honored included Kathleen Walker, Westside recreation program manager; Leanne Veldhuis, special uses program manager; Mary Ellen Fitzgerald, special uses specialist, and Bill Westbrook, Zigzag district ranger. Gordon Sondland, Oregon Film chair; Cheryl Strayed, the author of the book "Wild" from which the film is based, and Russell Hornsby, from the hit TV series, "Grimm," were among the many notable attendees at the event held at the Eastside Exchange Ballroom in Portland.

Honoree Bill Westbrook, district ranger for the Zigzag Ranger District appreciated the recognition. "It always feels good to be recognized for hard work," Westbrook said. "Putting together filming permits like the one we established for "Wild" took great efforts from many talented staff members. It's wonderful to celebrate their efforts in this way."

It is projected by the Oregon Film & Television Office that more money will be spent

in the state on various media projects this year than ever before. The Oregon Film & Television Office's Annual Governor's Award celebrates the diversity and achievements of media productions in Oregon. Since 2012, according to Oregon Film, the number of projects and companies benefiting from the various film advocacy groups and state agency programs has more than doubled. The number of jobs in the motion picture and video production sector has increased more than 60 percent in the last five years, and the number of indigenous production companies has seen growth of more than 25 percent over that same period.

The filming of "Wild" was conducted at many locations along the Pacific Crest Trail but with special focus on the Mt. Hood National Forest. A 75-person crew filmed for three weeks in October and

November of 2013 shooting a wide range of scenes around Mt. Hood National Forest such as Witherspoon throwing her boot off the cliff, meeting a Forest Ranger, seeing a fox in the snow outside her tent, purifying water with threatening hunters, and visiting a horse in its corral.

"I think part of the reason why the Mt. Hood National Forest was featured in the film is because of its dynamic history and geographical features," said Veldhuis. "We have structures that have maintained their historic integrity, lakes that make breathtaking backdrops, Timberline Lodge, and so much more. The film crews were able to knock out a lot of their desired scenes all at once."

Filming centered on Zigzag Ranger District and focused on the historic Clackamas Lake Ranger Station complex, Timberline Lodge, and Ski-bowl ski area.

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