

PENDLETON



Photo contributed by Andrew Wilson

Four people escaped with their lives Wednesday near Pendleton after the Ford Excursion they were in lost traction on an icy patch of Interstate 84 and ended up in the path of a semi-tractor pulling two trailers.

Pregnant mother recovering after crash

Vehicle hit by semi after sliding on ice

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

An icy freeway crash Tuesday afternoon near Pendleton injured three people, including a 25-year-old pregnant mother.

"I'm sore," Josette Wilson said, "but I'm alive."

Her unborn child also is healthy, said Wilson, who is confined to bed rest until her doctor says otherwise.

"I have a small tear in my placenta, and as long as I don't lift anything heavy and stay in bed as much as I can, it should be fine," she said.

Wilson and her husband of six months, Andrew Hayden Wilson, 19, were heading home to La Grande from work at Keystone RV, Pendleton. Their friends and co-workers, Isaiah Harris of La Grande and Christopher Burry of Summerville, also were in the Ford Excursion.

Wilson said she was leaving the Dead Man Pass rest area about 18 miles east of Pendleton and driving back onto Interstate 84 when the Ford hit a patch of ice in a shady area. She lost control and over-corrected, she said, and the vehicle spun toward the median.

Just then, she said, a FedEx semi-tractor pulling two trailers came around the corner and crashed into the Ford's driver side. She said she blacked out for a few moments.

"I had my head split open from going through the driver side window," Wilson said.

Wilson said the wreck trapped her, and Andrew called her uncle, Frank Meeks, a supervisor at Keystone who also was on the interstate to La Grande. He reached the crash scene and helped free her feet, she said, then medics arrived, tore out the broken center console, and pulled her from the passenger side.

The crash also banged up Burry, and ambulances took him and Wilson to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. Wilson said her cut took 16 staples to close. St. Anthony spokesman Larry Blanc said the doctors treated and released the pair that night.

Harris suffered a gash on his head and hair-line fractures in an arm and knee, Wilson said, and an emergency aircraft flew him to a Walla Walla hospital. But he, too, was back at home Thursday.

Wilson said she was dealing with the pain, and her husband also ached, but otherwise he was fine and taking care of her two children.

"He didn't have a scratch on him," she said.

Oregon State Police Lt. Mike Turner in Pendleton said the semi driver, Jeffery Shawn Martin, 45, of Portland, was uninjured. Turner said witness statements matched the evidence at the scene and there would be no citations.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

HERMISTON

Agape House receives Christmas donations

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Agape House received two large gifts on Thursday morning from Swain Motors and Harley Swain Subaru — a cash donation of \$3,500 and 625 pounds of canned and packaged food. The supplies were collected by employees and customers of the two companies, and will help the food bank during the coldest time of year.

Mike Boedigheimer of Harley Swain Subaru and his brother Jeff of Swain Motors started the food drive at their businesses on Nov. 15 and collected donations from customers and employees for one month. Swain Motors donated \$1,850 and Harley Swain Subaru contributed \$1,650.

"We tried this a couple of years ago, and it didn't go that well," Jeff said. "So this year we offered customers a



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Several volunteers help unload a donation of 625 pounds of canned food from Swain Motors and Harley Swain Subaru Thursday morning at Agape House.

discount on service and parts if they donated six cans, and employees donated as well."

Jeff said he was happy with the outcome of the food drive.

"I think it's something we're going to do next year," he said. Winter is a busy time of

year for the food bank, with increased need and more donations coming in from the community. As volunteers unloaded boxes and cans of food, Brian Mack and Michelle Lanigan pulled up in a pickup truck and unloaded

"People donate clothes and food. This is a great community to be in."

— Claudia Abney, volunteer at Agape House

150 wool blankets and 100 cotton blankets.

"This is really important this time of year," said Dave Hughes, director of the Agape House.

Claudia Abney, a volunteer at Agape House for the past year and a half, said the food bank gets regular donations from many stores in the community, as well as private citizens.

"We go to Wal-Mart five times a week, and Safeway on Fridays," she said, adding that other stores donate as well. "People donate clothes and food. This is a great community to be in."

LIGHTS: Randy said best places to buy decorations are yard sales

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cover every inch of a property.

His philosophy, despite an ever-growing collection of decorative options, is that less is more, leaving many of his displays and lights in storage.

"We keep things a little separated," he said. "We'll have a little theme over here, a Disney theme over there. I don't like it all bunched up."

Each year Randy would lead the family effort of hauling dozens of decorations out from under the house at 1317 SW Gamma Court and setting them up in different configurations around the yard and home. His wife, Sharon, and son Tyler would pitch in.

But four years ago, with Tyler off as a freshman at Montana Tech and daughter Sarah Marlene living out of town with her husband and children, Randy, who works seven nights a week at Newlywed Foods, decided to take a break.

"It's such a hassle to get it all out from under the house," he said. "(Tyler) normally helps me every year, and it's not too bad when everybody helps."

This year, the family is back together. Tyler is back from college and finishing up classes online, Sarah and her husband moved to Pendleton



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hamley Steakhouse & Cafe won best business display in the Chamber of Commerce's Christmas lighting contest.

with their two children and everyone got together in November to set up and plug in the display.

The family brought back the tradition at the right time. This year the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce revived its city-decorating contest and on Wednesday evening a panel of judges picked the Bigots' house as the best classical residential display. Harper and Kimberly Jones' home at 376 NE Owen Court was picked as the best

contemporary residential display, complete with lights timed to music. And Hamley Steakhouse & Cafe at 30 SE Court Ave. was deemed the best business light display.

The Bigots won a \$75 gift card to Hamley Steakhouse for his efforts and the Joneses were awarded \$75 to Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's.

The most unique element in Randy's display is the

mailbox to allow a letter addressed to Santa to fly out. Props like this aren't available in retail stores anymore, he said, even though he just bought it about 10 years ago at K-Mart.

The best places to buy classic Christmas decorations now are yard sales, and he said he and friends keep an eye out for unique displays all year round.

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