

Two men die in separate I-40 accidents

Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
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Traffic was snarled on Interstate 40 in both directions June 2, due to two separate fatality accidents. One occurred in Gallup, near the on-ramp of I-40 eastbound at Munoz overpass, and the other near the Refinery exit in Continental Divide, N.M.

As for the local accident, Gallup Police Dept. Capt. Marinda Spencer said based off the initial investigation, shortly after 1 pm, the driver, Ken Leatherman, 61, of Yuma, Ariz., lost control of his vehicle that was towing a 6-foot long utility trailer.

The accident report states that as he merged onto the freeway from Munoz overpass, heading eastbound on I-40, he swerved onto the left side of the roadway, overcorrected, and came back onto the roadway again. He swerved a second time, but this time when he tried to correct, the vehicle hit some dirt and then rolled before landing landing on its roof.

Leatherman died at the scene. His wife, Elizabeth Leatherman, was treated at a local hospital and released. No other vehicles were involved in the crash.

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Some hours later, at about 3:30 pm, New Mexico State Police investigated a fatal crash involving three semi-trucks on I-40, at milepost 39 (near Refinery exit), between Gallup and Grants.

The initial investigation indicated that a 2010 Volvo semi-truck was traveling east on I-40. The Volvo appears to have experienced a blow out on its left front steer tire. The Volvo crossed over the median into westbound traffic and collided with two other westbound semi-trucks.

The driver of the Volvo, Eshan Torabi, 35, of Las Vegas, NV sustained fatal injuries, and was pronounced dead at the scene. The drivers of the other two semi-trucks were treated for what is believed to be non-life threatening injuries, State Police Officer Ray Wilson stated in a press release.

While alcohol does not appear to be a contributing factor to the crash, seatbelts do not appear to have been “properly utilized,” the press release stated.

The crash is still under investigation and no additional information is available at this time.

By Babette Herrmann
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