

Aftermath of multi-vehicle collision

A Crownpoint mother is facing two counts of child abuse, as well as contributing to the delinquency of a minor after an incident in Gallup Nov. 14.

McKinley County Sheriff's Sgt. Anthony Morales was on patrol when he observed a three-vehicle collision near the intersection of Boardman Avenue and Highway 66. A silver Nissan Sentra ran a red light on Highway 66 and slammed into the driver's side of a white Chevrolet Silverado, which was traveling north on Boardman Avenue and turning left onto Highway 66.

The Silverado was hit with such force that it spun around 180 degrees and rolled into a red Chevrolet Malibu that was in front of Morales' patrol unit.

Morales made contact with the driver of the Sentra, (name withheld), and the passenger, the mother of the driver, later identified as Violet Jean Begaye, 48.

Sgt. Tammy Houghtaling and Deputy James Sanchez arrived shortly afterward. Houghtaling spoke with the underage driver, who admitted to having two beers earlier in the day. Both the driver and Begaye had bloodshot, watery eyes.

Houghtaling asked the driver why her mother allowed her to drive in her state. The driver said she had gone to Ford Canyon Park to pick up her friend, another passenger in the Sentra. Begaye said both the driver and her friend were intoxicated when they arrived, but she allowed

the driver behind the wheel, because she was not feeling well.

While Begaye was questioned, Sanchez attempted to issue the standard field sobriety test to the driver, but she was unable to follow directions, saying her knees were in pain and she was not able to stand or walk straight.

After being read the New Mexico Implied Consent Advisory, the driver was transported to McKinley County Sheriff's Office for a breath test. She posted two samples of .22.

Morales spoke with the drivers of the Silverado and the Malibu, both of whom appeared fine along with their passengers. When the Sentra was ready to be towed away, Morales checked inside the vehicle and found a bottle of Importers Vodka in the back seat where the driver's friend sat.

Begaye complained of an injury, so she was transported to Gallup Indian Medical Center's emergency room for medical clearance. The driver was also taken to GIMC for clearance and was then transported to Farmington Juvenile Detention Center and booked on charges of aggravated DWI, running a red light, failure to yield, having an open container in the vehicle, and not having a license.

After receiving medical clearance, Begaye was booked into McKinley County Adult Detention Center. Violet Begaye was charged with two counts of child abuse and two counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.