Multiple injuries sustained in crash

Deputy Merlin Benally of the Gallup McKinley County Sheriff's Office clocked a speeding vehicle at 104 mph in a posted 45 mph zone. According to the report, he was working a DWI Task Force on westbound Historic 66 approaching Toltec.

The vehicle, driven Kelly King, 37, of Gallup, sped past Benally's patrol car and passed the Shell gas station, at Exit 26. The vehicle then passed the New Mexico State Police Office, at a high rate of speed and Benally turned on the emergency lights in pursuit of the vehicle, the report stated.

At the 27 mile marker, the speeding vehicle passed a truck and drove up behind another dark colored GM truck. According to the report, the dark colored truck was pushed off the roadway in order to avoid a rear end collision.

The speeding vehicle then drove into the westbound lane and went head on with a Beige car and forced it off of the roadway, in order to avoid a collision. The vehicle continued speeding eastbound in a westbound lane at 80 mph, stated the report. The vehicle slowed to make a turn just before the intersection of Sundance Coal Mine road and 118.

Benally stated it was at this point he could read the license plate number on the vehicle. The vehicle then turned and headed south on Sundance Coal Mine road, in the northbound lane, speeding at 60 mph. The vehicle started swerving, drove into a ditch and collided with the dirt embankment. According to the report, the vehicle flipped, rolled over, and landed on its roof trapping the driver and passengers inside.

Mariah Shashewanie crawled out of the rear window and asked Benally where another passenger was, a 17-year-old female. Benally asked Shashewanie how many people were in the vehicle, she said four, according to the report.

Benally smelled alcohol on Shashewanie and saw several empty Bud Light containers, the report stated. He also saw miniature bottles of Yukon Jack inside and around the vehicle.

Benally reportedly asked Shashewanie “what was wrong with them” and why they were speeding at 104 mph. Shashewanie said, the driver “[King] f--ked up and they were trying to stop her.”

According to the report, Benally saw King trying to crawl out of her driver’s side window, but was stuck behind the steering wheel and seat. She could only slide back about a foot. Benally left King where she was when he heard moaning behind him. He used his flashlight and saw the missing passenger. According to the report, she was ejected and was lying 20 feet from the vehicle.

Shashewanie ran to the young female and tried to move her, but Benally told her to leave the victim where she was and wait for emergency assistance. When the ambulance arrived, they extracted the front seat passenger, Sarah Kanesta. The EMTs then helped King out of the driver’s seat. All four were transported to the hospital, according to the report.

Benally reported that at 3 am, he told Emergency Room Dr. Bart Wickersham that King was a possible DWI driver. King was unconscious, but a blood sample was taken from her.

King had fractures to her face and was bleeding behind the left eye. She was flown to Albuquerque. Kanesta sustained a head injury and was admitted to the hospital. The minor sustained a brain contusion and was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. Shashewanie didn’t have any major injuries and was later released to her family, the report stated.

Benally released King to the hospital and issued a Criminal Summons Sept. 28. King is charged with two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, careless driving, aggravated fleeing of law enforcement, and DWI.