

## Crashes on dunes kill two over Labor Day weekend

by Lori Tobias, The Oregonian

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Curfew comes at 10 p.m. in the South Jetty Dune Recreation Area near Florence, so when Lane County sheriff's Deputy John Franklin spotted an ATV cruising about 11:30 p.m. Saturday, he flipped on his red lights.

The ATV sped off.

"They were gone before our guy even got turned around," fellow Deputy Bill Thompson said.

Moments later, Franklin saw a plume of sand explode into the air. He went to the scene and found the ATV driver dead and his passenger seriously injured.

It was the second of two fatal ATV crashes last weekend at popular recreation areas.

The fatalities came weeks before the anniversary of a sand rail accident that killed two people and seriously injured two others Sept. 26, 2008, at the Sand Lake Recreation Area south of Tillamook.

Sand Lake was also the scene of the Labor Day weekend's first fatality. An ATV carrying two people collided with a sand rail -- a stripped-down dune buggy built of metal tubing and designed for speed -- carrying four people about 6:15 p.m. Friday, according to Tillamook Sheriff Todd Anderson.

Rescue workers revived ATV passenger Kayla Clemenhagen, 18, of Vancouver, but she died while awaiting Life Flight. She was wearing a helmet but was riding on an ATV designed for only one person. The driver, Shane Clemenhagen, 24, of Portland, had minor injuries.

The sand rail driver, Randall Keithley, 46, of Kalama, Wash., told deputies he spotted the ATV to his side and turned to avoid it, but the pair crashed side to side. He and his three passengers were not injured.

Neither driver showed any sign of impairment, but urine and blood-alcohol samples were taken, Anderson said.

The second fatality occurred as Deputy Franklin was calling dispatch to say he was going after an ATV.

Deputies, who patrol in pickups, have almost no chance of catching an ATV on the dunes unless the driver stops, Thompson said.

"What we do at night, we don't really even chase them, but watch and see what camp they go to and contact them there," he said.

When Franklin reached the accident, he found the driver, Casey Allen Renfroe, 20, of Eugene dead and his passenger, Teybra Welsh, 18, of Veneta seriously injured.

"They were going along on the dune, and there was a drop-off of about 3 feet," Thompson said. "They kind of nose-dived into that, and the vehicle started to tumble and both were thrown from it."

Alcohol and other substances might have been factors, Thompson said. The two were also riding an ATV meant to carry only one person.

Welsh remained in serious condition at Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend in Springfield.

Thompson was one of the deputies who notified Renfroe's father of his death. "He had just bought his son a new helmet which his son was not wearing at the time," Thompson said.

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