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Inglis May 18 crash investigated by LCSO; *Details are destined for future release*



LCSO Deputy Kevin Sheppard is seen as the first professional first-responder at the scene of the crash.

Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © May 21, 2017 at 1:37 p.m.

INGLIS -- A small, beautiful woodpecker fluttered away from the park behind Inglis Town Hall, 135 Levy County Road 40 West early Thursday afternoon (May 18).

A visiting journalist preparing to open a laptop computer in the park as he prepared for some post-lunchtime news coverage noticed the bird and thought "Wow."

Within a second, the sounds of screeching tires, the beep of a vehicle's horn and then the unmistakably horrible sound of metal crashing into metal resounded through the peaceful quiet park just as that instantaneous crash indicator reverberated for a quarter mile out from the central point of impact – U.S. Highway 19 and Levy County Road 40.

Three vehicles attempting to occupy the same space at the same time resulted in crushed metal and injured humans.

Within 10 seconds of the thud of metal smashing into metal, the sound of a Levy County Sheriff's Office cruiser's siren added to the echoes through the air – confirming there was a problem.

SEE VIDEO LINK ON MAY PAGE

In this video, the last second of the siren from the Inglis Fire Rescue engine is heard as it stops. Inglis Fire Rescue personnel are seen going to help the injured people by providing first aid prior to the Levy County Department of Public Safety's EMS crew arriving. Deputy Kevin Sheppard is seen assisting witnesses with what they need to do.

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A red pickup truck with its front end smashed (at right) is seen as a Town of Inglis Public Works employee walks around the city truck he was driving. Tools are scattered on the highway, intermingled with crash debris.



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Inglis Fire Rescue arrives to help accident victims.



This Dodge Ram 1500 is seen at its final resting point, one quarter of the way into the northbound lane of U.S. Highway 19 at the intersection with Levy County Road 40. One of the injured accident victims is lying on the pavement of the highway on the other side of this crash at this time.

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Levy County Department of Public Safety EMS arrives to help accident victims.

LCSO Deputy Kevin Sheppard must have been so close that he saw the accident or was able to initiate the cruiser's warning sounds to alert drivers to the danger in the area.

Joining Deputy Sheppard at the scene after some number of minutes was LCSO Deputy Nelson Macias. The deputies were among the first responders who helped divert traffic around the accident.

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The Inglis Fire Rescue Department arrived to provide first aid to the injured before the the Levy County Department of Public Safety sent ambulances to care for the injured and transport them to hospitals.

And just as the Chiefland Police Department investigated a fatal crash and provided details from that sorrowful accident six days after the crash, the Levy County Sheriff's Office began its investigation of that Thursday afternoon accident in Inglis, and information from that accident is destined for release at some point in the future.

On Friday morning (May 19), LCSO spokesman Lt. Scott Tummond said the LCSO is investigating the crash. Just as the CPD provides a level of law enforcement at the municipal or urban level of care, the LCSO has taken over that duty formerly assigned to the now-disbanded Inglis Police Department, as the Town of Inglis pays the LCSO for this higher level of service than the LCSO provides countywide.

Tummond said all of the next of kin of the victims in the accident had been notified and there were no fatalities. There was one truck from the Town of Inglis involved in the crash. Mayor Drinda Merritt said the vehicle may be a total loss if its frame is bent. Her first concern, however, is for the driver and he appears to have been injured but is going to be alright, from all preliminary indications.

Sometimes, the Florida Highway Patrol investigates accidents within the borders of Inglis and sometimes the LCSO investigates accidents within the town.

Final information about crashes that is provided to the media by the FHP is always more quickly released than from municipal or county law enforcement agencies.

The vision statement of the FHP is "A Safer Florida through Courtesy, Service, and Protection."

The mission statement of the FHP is "We will promote a safe and secure Florida through professional law enforcement and traffic safety awareness."

The values of the FHP are "Courtesy; Treat others fairly and professionally; Service; Render aid and assistance to members of the public; Protection; Protect life and property."

The strategic goals of the FHP are "Improve Traffic Safety; Interdict Criminal Activity; Enhance Homeland Security; Provide Communications; Retain, Develop, and Recruit Quality Employees; and Efficiently Acquire and Deploy Resources."

Details from the accident will be provided here after that is released from the LCSO.

* One driver charged after Inglis crash

By Jeff M. Hardison © May 26, 2017 at 1:47 p.m.

INGLIS -- One man was charged after a crash that injured four people in a three-vehicle accident on May 18 at the intersection of U.S. Highway 19 and Levy County Road 40 in the Town of Inglis, according to a crash report completed by the Levy County Sheriff's Office and provided on May 25 after a public records request soon after the crash.

The accident happened at 12:17 p.m. and LCSO Deputy Kevin B. Sheppard was on the scene immediately, according to the report, which he filed.

Michael Shane McCoy, 46, of Ocala was driving a 2012 Dodge pickup truck.

Albert A. Bertaut Jr., 73, of Thibodaux, Louisiana, was driving a 2015 Ford F-150 pickup truck. Marion C. Bertaut, 73, of Thibodaux, Louisiana, was a passenger in this truck.

Michael Anthony Ray, 64, of Inglis an employee of the Town of Inglis was driving a 2015 Ford F-250 pickup truck

McCoy was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked; failure to obey a traffic control device (ran red light); and failure to have proof of insurance).

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McCoy was northbound on U.S. 19 at approximately 60 mph in a 35 mph zone as he approached CR 40, Deputy Sheppard noted. He entered the intersection, failing to stop for the active red light, the deputy said.

Ray was driving the town's vehicle eastbound at approximately 20 mph, Sheppard said. The front center of McCoy's pickup truck hit the right rear of the truck being driven by Ray, Sheppard said, and the truck Ray was in then spun 90 degrees until it made contact with Bertaut's truck.

Bertaut had been westbound on CR 40, Sheppard said.

Ray was taken to Ocala Regional Medical Center with critical injuries.

Ray was taken to Seven Rivers Hospital (north of the City of Crystal River on U.S. 19), because he complained of neck and back pain, Sheppard said.

The Bertaut couple also was taken to Seven Rivers Hospital with on-life-threatening injuries, Sheppard said.

