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FHP investigation continues;

Five vehicles, 7 dead, and 8 injured

By Jeff M. Hardison © Jan. 4, 2018 at 7:18 p.m.

ALACHUA COUNTY – An accident Thursday afternoon (Jan. 3) that involved five vehicles, where seven people died and eight others were injured remains under investigation as of a 5:07 p.m. Jan. 4 press release from Florida Highway Patrol Lt. P.V. Riordan.

FHP Lt. Riordan based his press release on information from crash and homicide investigator FHP Col. Gabriel Keyes.

Steve Holland, 59, of West Palm Beach was driving a 2018 semi-truck that was hauling a box van at 3:40 p.m. on Jan. 3, the FHP said.

Holland's vehicle was northbound on I-75, in the right lane, the FHP said. There were no passengers in that vehicle, the FHP said.

Robin Rattray, 41, of Gainesville was driving a 2007 Honda five-door northbound on I-75, the FHP said, in the center or left lane. There were no passengers in that vehicle, the FHP said.

Amy Joffrion, 45, of Mansura, La., was driving a 2006 Chevy van southbound on I-75, in the center lane, the FHP said. There were 11 passengers in that church van that was on its way to Disney World from Louisiana.

The passengers were Ali LaBorde, 30, Chelsea LaBorde, 11, Karen Descant, 50, Cara Descant, 13, Briana Descant, 10, Joel Cloud, 14, Jeremiah Warren, 14, and Cierra Bordelan, 9, all of Marksville, La.; and Noah Joffrion, 14, of Mansura, La.; and Trinity Woodward, 9, and Chance Bernard, 9, both of Hessmer, La., the FHP said.

Douglas Bolkema, 49, of Albuquerque, N.M., was driving an unknown year, make and model of semi-truck (a semi-tractor trailer) that was southbound on I-75, in the right lane, the FHP said.

Mark Houghtaling, 61, of Gainesville was driving a 2006 Chevy pickup truck was southbound on I-75 behind the church van and behind the semi-truck driven by Bolkema in the center or right lane, the FHP said.

For an unknown reason, the semi-truck driven by Holland went toward the left into the path of 2007 Honda five-door, the FHP said.

The left side of the semi-truck Holland was driving made contact with the right side of the 2007 Honda 5-door and both of those vehicles traveled into the center median, the FHP said.

Both Holland's semi-truck and the Honda 5-door impacted the guardrail and traveled into the southbound lanes, the FHP said.

The semi-truck driven by Holland struck the driver side of church van and that van overturned multiple times, ejecting an unknown number of occupants, the FHP said.

Holland's semi-truck then struck Bolkema's semi-truck, the FHP said.

Holland's semi-truck, the Honda 5-door and Bolkema's semi-truck all caught on fire, the FHP said.

The Chevy pickup truck driven by Houghtaling struck at least one occupant of church van after that occupant had been ejected, after the impact with Holland's semi-truck.

Five children from Louisiana were among the dead. Following are the people listed as killed and injured

The dead are: Steve Holland, 59, of West Palm Beach; Joel Cloud, 14, of Marksville, La.; Jeremiah Warren, 14, of Marksville, La.; Cierra Bordelan, 9, of Marksville, La.; Cara Descant, 13, of Marksville, La.; Briana Descant, 10, of Marksville, La.; and Douglas Bolkema, 49, of Albuquerque, N.M., the FHP said.

Karen Descant, 50, of Marksville, La., was listed in critical condition at Shands, the FHP said.

The people with serious injuries were Robin Rattray, 41, of Gainesville; Amy Joffrion, 45, and Noah Joffrion, 14, both of Mansura, La. of Mansura, La.; Ali LaBorde, 30, of Marksville, La.; Chelsea LaBorde, 11, of Marksville, La.; Trinity Woodward, 9, and Chance Bernard, 9, both of Hessmer, La.

Houghtaling was not injured.

Most of the injured were taken to Shands, the FHP said, and the others were taken to North Florida Regional Medical Center.

As noted, the FHP continues to investigate this crash.

All northbound lanes of I-75 are open.

One southbound lane is open. The southbound center lane is expected to open mid-afternoon.

There is damage to the roadway, so drivers need to prepare for delays in the area.

Travelers may want to find an alternate route. **Call 5-1-1 for traffic condition updates.**