Anderson Independent-Mail (SC)
March 8, 2006
Edition: ALL
Section: Local News
Page: A5

Author: Hed: Answers buried with wreck victim By Pearce Adams Anderson Independent-Mail
Article Text:
HABERSHAM COUNTY - Unanswered questions to a high-speed chase late Saturday night might have been buried Tuesday with the body of a Cornelia man.
Sunday, a Georgia State Patrol spokesman said Michael Troy Simpson, 51, of Cornelia was killed in a one-vehicle accident at the intersection of Crane Mill and Pea Ridge roads in a rural, southern part of Habersham County about 11 p.m. on Saturday.
A toxicology test has been ordered to help determine if drugs or alcohol were factors that kept Mr. Simpson from complying when a county deputy attempted to stop his speeding 2002 Ford Mustang, said Habersham County Sheriff DeRay Fincher. The alleged speeding incident occurred on Crane Mill Road.
But why Mr. Simpson tried to elude authorities over what may have been a speeding infraction will never be known, officials said.
Mr. Simpson, a Chevrolet salesman and brother of Mitch Simpson, owner of Universal Chevrolet in Cleveland, attempted to elude the deputy, Sheriff Fincher said.
At one point during the chase, (Mr. Michael Simpson) "lost control and went into a ditch," the sheriff said. "My officer thought the pursuit had ended."
But the Mustang's driver was able to move "back and forth" and maneuver back onto the highway, doing slight damage to the deputy's vehicle.
The chase continued, and, at times, Mr. Simpson ran stop signs and drove without his headlights on, Sheriff Fincher said.
"I have reviewed the tape from an on-board camera," he said. "The deputy followed all procedures."
The chase ended at the end of Crane Mill Road, where a stop sign marks its intersection with Pea Ridge Road.
Trooper D. Snyder said the accident was reported at 11:03 p.m.
The Mustang crossed two lanes of Pea Ridge Road, where it "struck a road sign, an embankment and overturned, striking several small trees," Mr. Snyder said.
Coroner Don Pitts said Mr. Simpson died from blunt force trauma to his body.
"With his speed and a good part of the chase with no lights and running stop signs, someone else could have been seriously injured or killed," Sheriff Fincher said.
Mitch Simpson could not immediately be reached for comment on Tuesday.
Copyright (c) 2006 Anderson Independent-Mail