

State & Nation



AP

A semi truck sits Wednesday on Interstate 16 at the scene of a multi-vehicle pileup, near Jeffersonville. A total of 27 vehicles were involved in four separate accidents and four fatalities were reported, the Georgia State Patrol said.

Investigators look at road conditions in deadly I-16 crash

By **RUSS BYNUM**
Associated Press

SAVANNAH — Joel Moore had left home early to drive to a meeting with co-workers. Michael J. Smith was on his FedEx trucking route. Clayton Warnock and his wife, Josephine, had an appointment in Atlanta for a doctor to check his pacemaker.

Their lives all suddenly converged — and ended — along a rural stretch of Interstate 16 early Wednesday when 27 cars, pickup trucks and tractor-trailers braked, swerved and collided in a fiery chain-reaction pileup.

“He was going to Atlanta for a meeting at a hotel,” said Deborah Moore of Clio, whose 61-year-old husband worked as a wood chip quality technician for International Paper. She said she knew little about what happened in the crash. “I haven’t even wanted to see it on the news or anything.”

One westbound lane of I-16, where fuel vapors from an empty tanker exploded, remained closed Thursday. Authorities were still trying to piece together what caused the pileup that stretched nearly a quarter-mile, including whether a deadly mix of smoke and fog might have blinded drivers.

The Georgia Forestry Commission confirmed a landowner in Montrose, a small town by the interstate in Laurens County, had been permitted to burn brush on a 100-acre tract the day before the crash. Firefighters had also responded to a small wildfire in the same area late Tuesday afternoon. “There could have been some residual smoke even if the fire

wasn’t burning,” said Forestry Commission spokeswoman Wendy Burnett. “Where that smoke was and where the wind was blowing it is what our investigators are looking at right now.”

The National Weather Service had also issued a dense fog advisory for the area Wednesday morning, meaning visibility on the highway had been reduced to a quarter-mile or less.

The Georgia Department of Transportation said Wednesday it had dispatched workers to place caution signs on the interstate, but the crash happened before the crew arrived.

Gordy Wright, spokesman for the Georgia State Patrol, said investigators are certain visibility was reduced. But it’s not unknown if that was because of fog, smoke or a mixture of the two.

Combined smoke and fog can be extremely hazardous to drivers, and conditions early Wednesday around I-16 in Laurens County appear favorable for such a mixture if there had been fire in the area the day before, said Ken Frantz, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Peachtree City.

Frantz said rising humidity the night before the crash was conducive to forming fog, while high pressure and low wind in the area would have pressed it down low. The same conditions would have caused any smoke from the smoldering remains of a fire to hug the ground as well. By 8:10 a.m., when the crash happened, the sun likely wouldn’t have been up long enough to warm the air enough for any smoke and fog to rise and disperse.

DNR will not charge couple who nursed deer

Associated Press

GREENSBURG, Ind. — An Indiana special prosecutor said Thursday he has submitted a motion to dismiss the misdemeanor illegal possession charges against a couple who nursed an injured white-tailed deer back to health and kept it on their farm for two years, saying he did so at the request of the state agency that first requested the charges.

Decatur County Chief Deputy Prosecutor Douglas Brown said in an interview with the Associated Press that he had faxed to the court a request to dismiss the charges against Connersville police officer Jeff Counciller and his wife, Jennifer, and mailed a copy to the couple. The move came six days after the Department of Natural Resources asked that the charges be dropped.

Brown said he couldn’t comment further, saying the reasoning for the decision would be included in a special prosecutor’s report he hopes to have completed by Friday.

“I don’t think any state law should ever punish an act of kindness and compassion, especially when it saves an animal,” Jennifer Counciller said.

The DNR sought the charges after the deer the Councillers rescued went missing last summer on the day the DNR planned to euthanize it.

Jeff Counciller had earlier said he found the deer in 2010 curled up on a front porch with maggot-infested puncture wounds, so he took it back to his family’s 17-acre farm in Connersville to try to save it. The couple named the fawn Dani and kept it in a fenced enclosure.

Obituaries

Lela Perry

Lela May Perry, 92, passed away Feb. 5, 2013, in Jacksonville.

She was born Sept. 19, 1920, in Savannah and was the only daughter of William Dolphus Johnson and Lela May McCarthy Johnson.

Lela attended Georgia Southern, Georgia College and Georgia State University. She taught in public schools for many years before becoming a proofreader. She worked for several newspapers including the Atlanta Journal Constitution for 26 years.

Lela was a devoted member of St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta from 1962 to 2005. She was active in many church activities including the Altar Guild and the Shepherd’s Staff, and volunteered in the church office.

Lela was the beloved wife of Bryan Moody, who died in 1968, and James Perry, who died in 1986. She was a resident of Fleet Landing since October 2005.

Lela is survived by her stepdaughter, Barbara Martin, and her husband David P. Martin Sr. of Jonesboro, Ark.; granddaughter, Leigh Martin of Memphis, Tenn.; grandsons, David P. and Mary Nell Martin Jr. of Plano, Texas, and James P. and Sharon Martin of Jones-

boro, Ark.; nephews, Jimmy P. Johnson of Douglas, and Edgar M. and Fatima Johnson of Amelia Island, Fla.; niece, Maurine and Jack Schnitzius of Orange Park, Fla.; great-nephews, John and Lisa Johnson of Waycross, Jimmy (Bumpy) and Mary Johnson of Alma, David and Bridget Johnson of Burke, Va., John and Patricia Schnitzius of St. Johns, Fla., and Mark and Katherine Schnitzius of St. Johns, Fla.; and great-nieces, Victoria Madison of Ashburn, Va., Shelly Burton of Atlanta, and Kathe and Chuck Alexander of Tallahassee, Fla.

Lela’s funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Monday at Waverly United Methodist Church, 427 Middleton St., Waverly, GA 31565, followed by her burial at Homeward Cemetery in Waverly. A reception will follow the burial at the church hall at Waverly United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Lela’s honor to Fleet Landing, 1 Fleet Landing Blvd., Atlantic Beach, FL 32233, or 904-246-9900, ext. 430.

Arrangements are with Hardage-Giddens Funeral Home, 1701 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville Beach, FL.

Family-placed obituary
The Brunswick News February 8, 2013

Oliver Sears Sr.

Oliver Windell Sears Sr. departed to his heavenly home on Jan. 29, 2013, at Southeast Georgia Health System.

Mr. Sears was born July 1, 1952, in Ocala, Fla. He left home at an early age and began working up and down the Florida Coast, later enlisting in the U.S. Army and received an honorable discharge after four years.

Upon relocating to Georgia, he started his first of many businesses, Sears Towing and Recovery. He later purchased

Buddy’s Used Tires, where he became known to many as “Mr. Buddy.”

He leaves behind a loving wife, children and grandchildren. He will be truly missed.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Saturday at Greater Hall Temple Church of God in Christ, 3226 Norwich St., Brunswick. Burial with military honors will be in Greenwood Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 7 p.m. Friday at the chapel of Brunswick Funeral Home.

The procession will leave from 2275 Pinewood Drive. Brunswick Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Family-placed obituary
The Brunswick News February 8, 2013

Gordon Innes

Gordon Martin Innes, 84, of Brunswick passed away Friday, Jan. 25, 2013, at his residence.

A native of Dundee, Scotland, Mr. Innes was born Jan. 6, 1929, to the late George Innes and the late Catherine Martin Innes. Mr. Innes had been a resident of Glynn County for the past 12 years. He was a graduate of Blackness High School in Dundee, Scotland.

A veteran of the British Army, Mr. Innes enlisted in 1949 and was honorably discharged in 1953, serving in the Royal Army Service Corps as a non-commissioned officer.

He was employed with Union Carbine as a millwright, from which he retired.

Mr. Innes had a love for Scottish history, classical music and opera. He enjoyed ballroom dancing, soccer and tennis. Mr. Innes had a great love for West-

ern movies, especially John Wayne, whom he admired.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by three brothers and four sisters.

He is survived by his loving wife of 63 years; four daughters; a son; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; a sister; and many other relatives.

A memorial service may be held at a later date in Dundee Scotland.

The family requests memorial contributions be made to the Disabled American Veterans, Attn: Gift Processing, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. Checks should be made payable to the DAV.

Arrangements are entrusted to Edo Miller and Sons Funeral Home and Oglethorpe Crematorium.

Family-placed obituary
The Brunswick News February 8, 2013

Benjamin Lewis Sr.

Benjamin Lewis Sr. of Brunswick died Jan. 30, 2013, at Southeast Georgia Health System.

He was a U.S. Army Veteran.

A funeral service will be at 11 a.m. on Saturday at St. Luke Baptist Church on Sapelo Island. The Sapelo Island Passenger Ferry will leave the Meridian Dock at 9 a.m.

Interment will follow in Behavior Cemetery, Sapelo Island.

The family will greet friends from 6 to 7 p.m. Friday at Prudence Hall Chapel of Hall, Jones and Brown Funeral Home.

Hall, Jones and Brown Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

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Area deaths

John Earl McMullen of Darien died Wednesday at Hospice of the Golden Isles.

Darien Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Jonathan Newton of Darien died Thursday at Southeast Georgia Health System.

Darien Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Jackson Mathis died Thursday at his residence.

Brunswick Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Sylvia Holland died Wednesday at Southeast Georgia Health System.

Brunswick Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

About obituaries

Obituaries with direct connections to The News circulation area of Glynn, Brantley, Camden and McIntosh counties are published free. Family-placed obituaries, which may contain additional information, are paid.

If you have questions about obituaries, please call 265-8320.

Linda Rowe

Funeral services for Linda (Walden) Rowe will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Zion Baptist Church, 1611 G St., Brunswick, with the Rev. Craig Campbell officiating. Burial will follow in Greenwood Cemetery. The body will be placed in the church one hour prior to the service.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday in the Harrison Grant Chapel at R.L. Jones and Sons Funeral Home.

R.L. Jones and Sons Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

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Mary Crews

Mary Jeanette Griffin Crews, 92, of Hoboken died Wednesday at Hospice of the Golden Isles in Brunswick, following an extended illness.

A funeral service will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church with the Rev. Mike Yawn officiating. Burial will follow in High Bluff Cemetery.

Visitation will be held an hour prior to the service.

Arrangements are with Frye Funeral Home, Nahutta.

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Deaths elsewhere

AUGUSTA — Former state Rep. **Jack Connell**, 93, of Augusta, who served more than three decades in the Georgia House of Representatives, has died.

The Augusta Chronicle reports Connell died Wednesday. Services for Connell are planned for 2 p.m. Saturday at St. Paul Episcopal Church in Augusta.

The Democrat served 34 years in the Georgia House, where he spent 26 years as speaker pro tempore, its No. 2 position.

Connell also owned and managed several local businesses over the years.

—Associated Press

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