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For Immediate Release:
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Saturday, Oct. 16, 2004

Investigation initiated following pursuit and officer involved shooting

Suquamish, Wash. -- An investigation has been initiated into the death of an adult male, following a police vehicle pursuit and officer involved shooting that occurred yesterday in North Kitsap.

No law enforcement officers were killed or injured.

Location: 19000 block of NE Columbia Street, outside the unincorporated town of Suquamish, within the boundary of the Port Madison Reservation (Suquamish Tribe).

Time & date: 12:23 p.m. – 1:05 p.m., Friday, Oct. 15, 2004

Involved:

- (1) Older model Chevrolet half-ton pick-up truck, blue in color, towing an empty boat trailer. The driver was the sole occupant of the truck.
- (2) Officers from Suquamish Police Department and two police vehicles.

Situation:

Officers from Suquamish Police Department responded to a parking area in the Suquamish Village shopping center, 18490 Suquamish Way NE, following a 911 broadcast to north county law enforcement agencies of an erratically driven truck in the town of Suquamish.

It was further reported that the driver of the truck had forced four vehicles off of the roadway and that the truck had also driven off of the roadway and then back onto the asphalt.

Additional information was broadcast that the truck had subsequently pulled into Suquamish Village and had struck a parked vehicle. Concerned motorists had followed the truck into the Suquamish Village parking area, in an attempt to keep the driver from leaving while awaiting law enforcement response.

As the initial responding units arrived at Suquamish Village, the driver of the truck exited the parking area at a high rate of speed, heading north on Division Street NE, before the officers could make contact with him.

The two Suquamish Police vehicles followed in pursuit, attempting to stop the truck, in order to prevent any further damage or possibly injury or death to other motorists or pedestrians. The police vehicles had their emergency lights and sirens activated.

The pursuit continued northbound on Division Street to the intersection of NE Columbia Street, where the driver of the truck turned left.

It was on Columbia Street that the driver of the eluding truck suddenly stopped, reversed, and crashed the truck and boat trailer into the lead Suquamish police vehicle, a Ford SUV. This action was repeated several times at various intervals on Columbia Street, with the lead police vehicle finally becoming immobilized due to extensive damage.

It was during this last volatile encounter, that a Suquamish officer discharged a firearm at the driver of the truck. It is unknown, at this time, how many shots were fired.

The truck then continued out of Suquamish on Columbia Street, traveling northbound, heading towards the unincorporated area of the county.

The second pursuing Suquamish police vehicle came upon the truck in the 19500 block of Columbia Street, just south of NE Middle Street, at the border of the Port Madison Reservation. The truck was found turned perpendicular to the roadway with the front end in a drainage ditch; a fire had ignited underneath the truck. The boat trailer had become detached from the truck and was positioned in the roadway.

The driver was injured. He was removed from the truck and emergency medical support was requested. An off-duty firefighter-emergency medical technician, from North Kitsap Fire & Rescue (NKF&R), came upon the scene behind the second pursuing police vehicle, and assisted by initiating first aid / emergency life saving efforts to the driver.

Fire and medical units from NKF&R arrived shortly thereafter and rendered advanced life saving measures to the driver. Firefighters extinguished the fire underneath the truck.

The driver subsequently died at the scene.

Additional patrol units from the Sheriff's Office and Poulsbo Police Department also responded to help secure the immediate area, and portions of the pursuit route, pending commencement of the investigation.

Investigation:

Detectives and investigators from the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office and the Washington State Patrol have initiated a joint investigation into the driver's death.

The Kitsap County Coroner has recovered the body of the driver. An autopsy is scheduled for Monday (10/18/2004).

The Coroner, in conjunction with the forensic pathologist, will make a determination as to the cause and manner of death as part of the Coroner's investigation.

Although witnesses reported the driver as driving erratically, it is unknown whether or not the driver was operating the truck under the influence of alcoholic intoxicants or narcotic substances. Laboratory toxicology tests will be conducted as part of the autopsy.

The Seattle Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has been notified. In a cooperative arrangement, the FBI has assigned a special agent to assist with the investigation since the death occurred on a tribal reservation.

The name of the driver has not been made available for public release pending notification of family members.

Aftermath:

The Suquamish officer involved in the shooting has been placed on administrative leave while the investigation is being conducted.

NE Columbia Street, from the intersection of Division Street NE to the intersection of NE Middle Street, was closed to through traffic for approximately 11 hours as crime scene investigators processed evidence.

The investigation continues. Anyone who may have witnessed any part of this incident is asked to contact the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office at (360) 337-7101.

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