

BHS graduate dies, driver arrested in car crash

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By Abby Sewell, staff writer

This is an updated version of a story posted earlier Wednesday.

BARSTOW — A young Barstow man died early Wednesday morning and a girl was arrested after the car they were driving crashed into a power pole.

Dusty Aaron Cox, 20, a Barstow High School class of 2006 graduate, was pronounced dead at the scene after being thrown from the 2007 Kia Optima in which he was a passenger. The car veered off the road and struck the pole at about 1:12 a.m. on the 2000 block of westbound Lenwood Road, west of Interstate 15, according to Barstow Police Department call logs and San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner Department spokeswoman Sandy Fatland.

Cox was not wearing a seatbelt, Fatland said.

The driver of the car, a 16-year-old girl, was treated for injuries at Barstow Community Hospital and then arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of intoxicants, according to a Barstow Police Department report. There were no other passengers in the car, according to city spokesman John Rader.

Cox's family could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

His former high school English teacher, Marcy Udell, remembered the tall, blond young man as a student who worked hard and lightened up a room with his smile.

"He was a student that just tried to do his best," she said of Cox. "He tried to do right, tried to treat others well."

She remembered watching Cox's transition from an "ornery" freshman to a focused young adult.

"By the time his junior year rolled around, he just became this wonderful, genuine young man that worked hard," she said. "He really wanted his diploma."

Cox enrolled in the accounting program at Barstow Community College in the Spring 2008 semester, college spokeswoman Maureen Stokes. He was not enrolled in classes at the time of his death.

Barstow High School principal Ed Cheek said the school had no plans for memorial events as of Wednesday morning, but grief counseling will be available to students. Central High School principal Jim Davis, who called the crash "a bad situation all around," confirmed that the driver was a sophomore there. The school has taken no disciplinary action against her, he said.

"At this point, we're leaving it up to the police and then we go from there," he said.

Rader said the driver may face added charges pending the outcome of the Barstow Police Department investigation.

To report information relating to the crash, call Barstow Police Department Cpl. Andrew Ellis at 760-256-3531. To remain anonymous, call WE-TIP at 1-800-78-CRIME or leave information on the WeTip Web site at www.wetip.com.

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