

Virginia State Police

Media Release

www.vsp.virginia.gov

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STATE POLICE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES INTO ALBEMARLE COUNTY PURSUIT & FATAL SHOOTING

New Information Released on Initial Hit-and-Run in Greene County

KEENE, Va. – The investigation continues into the multi-agency pursuit that involved a stolen sheriff's patrol vehicle and ended in an exchange of gunfire in Albemarle County Friday afternoon (Jan. 1, 2010). Once Virginia State Police (VSP) has concluded its investigation, the case will be turned over to the Albemarle County Commonwealth's Attorney for final review. The ongoing investigation is being handled by VSP's Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Appomattox Field Office's Police Shooting Investigative Team.

Friday's series of events began in Greene County with the report of a green 1996 Ford Ranger pickup truck being reported to the Sheriff's Office because the truck was taken without authorization from its owner.

Shortly thereafter, Virginia State Police Master Trooper J.W. Sullivan Jr. was called to the scene of a hit-and-run in Greene County. The incident occurred at approximately 1:30 p.m. Friday on Rosebrook Road approximately 3/10 of a mile south of Route 626/Snow Mountain Road. The hit-and-run involved a 2002 Daewoo Nubira that had been traveling north on the dirt road, when it encountered the 1996 Ford Ranger pickup traveling south.

According to the driver of the Daewoo, the pickup was traveling at a high rate of speed as it came down the narrow road. The Daewoo's driver swerved to the right and stopped to avoid being struck by the oncoming pickup truck. However, the pickup still sideswiped the driver's side of the Daewoo and kept going. While waiting for the trooper to arrive to investigate the incident, the pickup truck passed the Daewoo again, this time headed north on Rosebrook Road.

The driver of the Daewoo was not injured in the minor crash.

A Greene County Deputy Sheriff out on patrol and aware of the hit-and-run headed up Snow Mountain Road and spotted the pickup truck. The driver of the pickup, Colby W. Eppard, 18, of Stanardsville, suddenly turned the vehicle around in the road and tried to speed off in the opposite direction. Eppard lost

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control of the pickup and it ran off the side of the road. The 18-year-old then took off on foot into the woods.

The Greene County Deputy Sheriff pursued Eppard on foot into the woods. In the woods, Eppard was able to elude the Deputy Sheriff and return to the crashed pickup truck.

When the Deputy Sheriff left his patrol vehicle, he secured it by locking its doors. When Eppard discovered the patrol vehicle was locked, he broke out a window with a rock and stole the marked patrol car.

Albemarle County Police later spotted the stolen Greene County patrol car and attempted to stop it. Eppard refused to comply and a pursuit was initiated. The pursuit ended at approximately 2:30 p.m. on Route 20 in the community of Keene in Albemarle County when Eppard lost control of the patrol car, ran off the right side of the road and into a dirt embankment.

Eppard then started shooting at police, who returned fire. Eppard died at the scene. His body was transported to the Office of the Medical Examiner in Richmond for examination.

Agencies involved in the actual pursuit included Greene County Sheriff's Office, Albemarle County Police, Virginia State Police, Scottsville Police and Conservation Police with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

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