



By Tim Linscott

Managing Editor

Two accidents on Thursday, Oct. 3, kept fire, ambulance and sheriff department officials busy. As clean-up from one accident was completed, another call drew first responders and law enforcement officials out to a scene.

At 9:04 a.m. on Oct. 3 the sheriff's department was notified of an accident in Brandon. Two semi-trucks were involved in an accident that left a mess on Highway 23.

Rodney L. Wentz, 73, of Quinter, Kan., was driving a 2001 Kenworth semi-truck pulling a grain trailer and traveling northbound on Robinson St. in Brandon. A second vehicle, a 2007 Freightliner pulling a mash trailer, driven by Richard L. Brown, 52, of Haxtun, Colo., was heading west on Highway 23.

The front passenger side of Brown's vehicle collided with the rear passenger side of the Wentz vehicle. The cause of the accident was listed as Wentz's failure to yield the right-of-way to Brown. Wentz was given a citation for failure to yield the right-of-way.

Approximately \$20,000 in damage was done to each truck and both trucks were towed away. No injuries were reported in the accident and neither driver was wearing a seat belt.

Distiller's grain from Brown's vehicle was spilled all over the highway, making for very slick conditions. Highway 23 traffic was diverted through Brandon during the clean-up phase of the accident.

Crews were on hand for over two-and-a-half hours trying to clean up the mess.

The Venango and Grant fire departments, along with the Perkins County Sheriff's office and the county and state department of roads helped assist in the accident.

At 4:19 p.m. crews were called to the scene of an accident north of Grant.

Christine L. Deaver, 28, of Grant, was driving a 1999 Pontiac sedan north on Highway 61 when she slowed down to make a turn off of the highway to a private residence. She was struck from behind by Brooke J. Pankonin, 29, of Ogallala.

Pankonin was driving a 2012 Ford Focus.

The Deaver vehicle sustained \$3,000 in damages and the Pankonin vehicle was considered a total loss and towed from the scene. The front airbag in the Pankonin vehicle deployed during the accident.

Pankonin received a minor injury to her hand and was transported to Perkins County Hospital via the Grant Ambulance Department.

Pankonin received a citation for driving too closely and the cause of accident was determined to be distracted driving. Deaver was not wearing a seatbelt and Pankonin was wearing a shoulder and lap strap at the time of the accident.

“We’d like to remind people when crossing an intersection or driving on the highway, especially during harvest season, to be attentive of traffic,” Jim Brueggemann, Perkins County Sheriff, said.

