

Rig collisions shut down U.S. 167

None seriously injured

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A dump truck, an 18-wheeler tanker and an 18-wheeler flatbed tangled on U.S. 167 north Tuesday afternoon, but no one involved was seriously injured.

Traffic, however, was rerouted from the major north-south thoroughfare from about 2:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m., said Ruston Police Public Information Officer Lt. Curtis Hawkins. Southbound traffic was forced onto Jefferson Avenue, and northbound traffic was diverted to Frazier Road during the interim.

The end results were one citation — for careless operation, issued to the driver of the dump truck — and a cleanup effort to remove diesel fuel, oil, debris scattered over at least 100 yards of roadway and the damaged vehicles from the scene of the wrecks.

Hawkins said that, all things considered, the outcome could have been worse. The tanker, which was a petroleum company rig carrying isobutane, did not rupture or release its cargo, and no other passenger vehicles or

people were involved in the multi-truck collision, Hawkins said.

“No hazardous material was released from the isobutane truck,” Hawkins said. “And we’re very thankful for that; that would have been bad. We were extremely lucky that there were no serious injuries and no other vehicles involved.”

The series of collisions began, Hawkins said, when a 1991 Mack dump truck driven by Douglas Gullede crossed the center line for unknown reasons. Gullede, 44, veered his vehicle into the path of a northbound 2002 Freightliner tanker carrying the isobutane driven by 61-year-old Mark Branch of DPI Petroleum in Petal, Miss.

Branch said he had an odd feeling when he saw the dump truck coming south, and started steering away.

“He hit my back end though,” Branch said. “It could have been a hell of a lot worse if I hadn’t moved over.”

His Freightliner’s rear end was twisted and the rear axle was significantly damaged. There were also gouges on the side of the tank. It appeared at



Leader photo by JESSICA WETHINGTON

Lincoln Parish Fire District No. 1 Chief Dennis Ford (right) sprays foam at the scene of a multi-vehicle wreck Tuesday to cover oil and gas that spilled from one of the vehicles.

the scene that his rig left the road and went through yards along U.S. 167, flattening several mailboxes.

A vehicle behind the tanker, a 2005 Peterbilt flatbed, swerved to miss the oncoming dump truck, but struck the front end, Hawkins said. The collision sheared the front off of the dump truck, exposing the engine

and scattering diesel, oil and debris. Hawkins said Ruston Fire Department reports estimated that 50 gallons of diesel and 20-30 gallons of oil were spread over the northbound lanes of U.S. 167. Gullede was taken to the hospital and released with minor injuries.

More information on the driver of the Peterbilt was un-

available this morning.

Hawkins said emergency responders included the RPD, RFD, Lincoln Parish Sheriff’s Office, Lincoln Parish Fire District No. 1, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana State Police Hazardous Materials and Explosives Control Unit and Ruston Public Works.