

Abby Liefer And Hannah Porter Die In Head-On Auto Accident On Route 159

By Bethany Prange

THE INDEPENDENT

Four young Red Bud girls were involved in a head-on collision on Rt. 159 between Hecker and Red Bud last Saturday night, Jan. 10. Two of the girls died later that night from injuries sustained in the collision.

The deceased girls are Hannah Marie Porter, 20, of Red Bud, and Abigail Liefer, 19, of Ruma.

Crystal Steinheimer, 21, of Red Bud, sustained serious injuries, while Grace Richards, 21, of Red Bud, received minor injuries.

The accident occurred at 10:35 p.m., near 5140 Rt. 159, a few miles south of the

Hecker city limits.

Liefer was driving a Chevy Cobalt southbound on Rt. 159 (toward Red Bud). Porter was sitting in the back seat and Richards was the front seat passenger.

Steinheimer was the driver of the other car involved, a Chevy Aveo. According to the Illinois State Police, Steinheimer's car was traveling northbound (toward Hecker). For a yet unknown reason, Steinheimer's car crossed into the southbound lane directly into the path of Liefer's car. The two vehicles hit head-on. The Aveo came to rest in the northbound lane's ditch, while Liefer's Cobalt skidded into the southbound lane's ditch.

There were several fellow motorists who witnessed the accident. They immediately called 911. County deputies, a state patrol officer, Red Bud officers, the Hecker and Red Bud Fire Departments, two emergency helicopters and two Monroe County ambulances rushed to the scene.

Hecker and Red Bud firefighters used Jaws of Life equipment to assist Monroe County paramedics in extricating the victims from their vehicles.

Porter was transported by ambulance to Red Bud Regional where she pronounced deceased. Liefer was flown to a St. Louis hospital

where she died.

Steinheimer was flown to a St. Louis hospital where she is recovering from serious injuries.

Richards was transported by ambulance to a Belleville hospital. She sustained minor injuries.

According to the state police, they are continuing to investigate the case. They are waiting for lab results and other items from their ongoing investigation. At this point, alcohol has not been ruled out as a factor.

Abigail Liefer is the daughter of Daniel Liefer of Ruma and Shari Thomas of Titusville, Fla. She was a student at SWIC and worked at the YMCA of Red Bud. Visitation and funeral were at



Abby Liefer

Koch-Liefer Funeral Home in Red Bud.

Hannah Porter is the daughter of Scott and Dawn (nee Hartmann) Porter, and sister of Brennan and Graci



Hannah Porter

Porter. She was employed at the Randolph County YMCA and SWIC's Red Bud Campus. Visitation and funeral were at Welge-Pechacek Funeral Home in

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Firefighters gather up their equipment after Crystal Steinheimer was transported to an emergency helicopter.



Hecker and Red Bud firefighters carry Crystal Steinheimer to an Arch helicopter. She remains at an area hospital being treated for her injuries sustained in last weekend's accident on Rt. 159.