

PONTIAC DAILY LEADER

Crash results in death of two teens

By Paul Westermeyer

Posted Sep 6, 2016 at 3:03 PM

A two-car collision Sunday night on Route 116, just outside of Pontiac, resulted in the deaths of two teenagers attending Prairie Central High School, officials said.

Livingston County Deputy Coroner Dean Wilhelm pronounced Jose Carlos Baeza-Padilla, 17, dead at the scene only an hour after the collision. A passenger in Baeza-Padilla's vehicle, Lynse Stokes, 15, was transported to OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria via Life Flight, where she died of multiple blunt force injuries Monday morning, according to Peoria County Coroner Johnna Ingersoll.

Officials said that Baeza-Padilla had been a resident of Meadows at the time of his death, while Stokes was residing in Chenoa.

The driver of the other car, Leah Metz, 25, did not require hospitalization as a result of the collision, according to Illinois State Police District 6 officials.

State police said that the crash occurred at approximately 8:33 p.m. Sunday night in Owego Township, between Pontiac and Saunemin. According to state police, the vehicle occupied by Baeza-Padilla, a black 1997 Nissan Coupe, was turning left onto westbound Route 116 from County Road 1900 East. Metz, a Cullom resident, was traveling east on Route 116 in a black 2003 Ford Utility when the Coupe entered her path of travel.

State police reported that Metz was unable to avoid striking the Baeza-Padilla vehicle.

Once the Coroner's Office responded to the scene, Wilhelm pronounced Baeza-Padilla dead at the scene at 9:25 p.m. Sunday night. Stokes was transported to OSF St. Francis, but did not survive the injuries she sustain as a result of the collision; Ingersoll said she was pronounced dead at the hospital at 11:57 a.m. Monday morning as a result of multiple blunt force injuries from the crash, according to the autopsy report.

Livingston County Coroner Danny Watson said that a preliminary autopsy report showed that Baeza-Padilla also died as a result of multiple blunt force

injuries. He noted that a more comprehensive autopsy had been ordered. Pontiac Fire Department, Fairbury Fire Department, Duffy Ambulance, Southeast Livingston County Ambulance Service, Livingston County Sheriff's Police, Illinois State Police and the Coroner's Office all responded to the scene, Watson said.

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