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SR 19 crash injures two, spills fuel

*By Kirk Collier
The Palatka Daily News*

A three-vehicle wreck at the intersection of State Road 19 and Silver Lake Drive Monday morning sent two people to the hospital and spilled diesel fuel on the highway, the Florida Highway Patrol said.

Sherri Augustine, 40, of Salt Springs was driving northbound on State Road 19 in a red Ford 350 pickup truck at about 8 a.m., said FHP Trooper Bruce Atchison. Jerry Gaines, 34, of Newberry was driving an 18-wheel sand and rock hauler northbound behind Augustine, Atchison said.

Theodore Nemic, 61, of Palatka, was stopped facing south in the left turning lane to turn onto Silver Lake Drive.

Atchison said as Augustine was approaching the intersection, the traffic light changed to red and she began slowing down. Gaines was unable to stop and hit the rear of Augustine's truck, pushing it across the intersection and into Nemic's truck, Atchison said. "Both went clear through the intersection, into the straight-ahead lane and the left turning lane hitting Nemic," Atchison said. "Nemic's truck ended up in the woods facing east."

Atchison said Nemic was taken to Putnam Community Medical Center with minor injuries and was released Monday. A passenger in Augustine's truck, 48-year-old Michael Cunningham of Salt Springs, received a head injury and was also taken to PCMC, according to Atchison.

Gaines was charged with careless driving, Atchison said. "There was no evidence of excessive speed or alcohol in the accident," he said.

Putnam County Fire Marshal Joe Guidry said approximately 10-15 gallons of diesel fuel spilled from one of the pickup trucks.

He said firefighters from the Southwest Volunteer Fire Department used F-500 foam, a relatively new firefighting tool, to clean up the spill.

Guidry said a by-product of the foam, normally used to put out fires, is that it breaks down petroleum products. He said the foam was sprayed onto the diesel fuel, left for a few minutes and then hosed down with water.

"We're encouraging all of our volunteer fire departments to use it," Guidry said.

"It's excellent for fighting fires."

Guidry said because the foam was used for the cleanup, the intersection was re-opened "rather quickly."

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