

News Release

La Porte Police Department
1206 Michigan Avenue
La Porte, IN 46350-3525

Thomas D. Heath, Assistant Chief
(219)362-9446 Ext. 103
theath@lpcitypd.com

For Immediate Release

Date: February 19, 2010

Reference: Pursuit of a Wanted Suspect

On Thursday, February 18, 2010 at 7:45 PM, officers received information that a wanted suspect, Michael K. Bowser, age 21 of Kingsbury was at a business on Pine Lake Avenue in LaPorte. It was confirmed that Bowser was wanted on felony warrants by the LaPorte County Sheriff's Office as well as a Failure to Appear through the LaPorte Police Department. Officers observed the suspect vehicle, a silver GMC Jimmy, leaving the area as they approached.

Patrolman Robert Allen, assisted by Captain Clyde Crass and Patrolman Robert Greer, initiated a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle in the 200 block of Pine Lake Avenue and the suspect pulled into the lot of a local business. Officers approached the vehicle, opened the driver's door and asked Bowser to step from the vehicle. Bowser then accelerated rapidly away striking Captain Crass' leg and running over one of his feet with the vehicle and fled the scene.

Bowser turned north on Rockwood Street, west on Warren Street and then north on Pine Lake and State Road 39 before turning east on Severs Road. Patrol Specialist Darin Mercer deployed tire deflation devices near the intersection of Severs and fail Roads. The suspect took a direct line toward Patrol Specialist Mercer who was on the shoulder of the road, and accelerated as he did so, forcing Patrol Specialist Mercer to dive down a steep embankment to avoid being struck. Thankfully, the vehicle struck Patrol Specialist Mercer's tire deflation devices and its tires began to slowly deflate as intended.

From there, the suspect turned north on fail Road and continued on for half a mile or a little further before veering off into a field on the east side of the road. The vehicle came to a stop in the field with all four of its tires deflated. The suspect then bailed out of the vehicle and fled eastbound on foot. Captain Crass and Patrolman Greer attempted to pursue the suspect on foot. Captain Crass was unable to continue the foot pursuit due to his leg injuries, so he returned to the suspect vehicle. Patrolman Greer, a young very fit officer who works out regularly, eventually had to abandon the pursuit due to breathing difficulties. Patrol Specialist Mercer and Patrolman Allen were able to track the suspect into a wooded area. Deputy Harlan Williams and his K-9 arrived on scene along with Patrol Specialist Mercer were able to track the suspect to 150E while LaPorte County Sheriff's Office setup a perimeter and conducted as thorough of search as possible. Officers were unable to locate and arrest Bowser.

Captain Crass was taken to LaPorte Hospital by ambulance, treated for leg injuries and released. Patrolman Greer was also transported to LaPorte Hospital, treated for his breathing difficulties and then released. It is unknown at this point when Captain

News Release

La Porte Police Department
1206 Michigan Avenue
La Porte, IN 46350-3525

Thomas D. Heath, Assistant Chief
(219)362-9446 Ext. 103
theath@lpcitypd.com

Crass will be released to return to duty. Patrolman Greer is expected to return to work on February 23, 2010. We hope and pray for their well being and full recovery.

A 17 year old juvenile female who was a passenger in the vehicle was detained, interviewed and later released without being charged. The vehicle that Bowser that was driving at the time of this incident had been reported stolen. Numerous additional criminal and traffic charges will be filed against Bowser. Detectives and crime scene technicians from the LaPorte County Sheriff's Office and LaPorte Police Department are assisting in the investigation and may file some additional charges against Bowser as well. The top level leadership of both agencies as well as the Chiefs of Detectives of both agencies responded as well. Numerous deputies assisted in the search. Two officers from the LaPorte Police Department's midnight had be called in early to staff the shift as a result of the injuries to the officers and the fact that other officers were tied up dealing with this scene. It was an excellent example of teamwork on the part of both agencies involved.

The LaPorte County Sheriff's Office and LaPorte Police Department ask that anyone with information regarding the current whereabouts of Michael Bowser please contact their agencies or dial 911. We would like to apprehend Bowser as soon as possible as his actions seriously endangered the safety of the citizens of the City of LaPorte and LaPorte County and injured two police officers.