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(SD)-Sturgis Rally Records First Traffic Death

By: John Axtell Posted at: 08/06/2019 11:50 PM

STURGIS, S.D. - The 79th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally suffered its first fatality Monday afternoon, a 29-year old motorcycle rider who crashed on Old Rochford Road about 12 miles south of Lead. There were 2 fatalities at this time last year.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the rider, whose name has not been released and was not wearing a helmet, failed to negotiate a curve, crossed the center line, and slid into a ditch. He was thrown from the motorcycle and died at the scene.

There was also a 3-motorcycle crash Monday afternoon on Highway 79 about 9 miles north of Sturgis that injured 5 people.

The Highway Patrol says two riders tried to pass a third bike but crashed when it turned left in front of them. Two of the riders suffered serious non-life threatening injuries while the third received only minor injuries. Passengers on two of the bikes also had minor injuries.

As of 6:00 am Tuesday, there had been 18 injury accidents and 16 non-injury accidents in western South Dakota connected with this year's Rally. That's 3 fewer injury accidents and 6 fewer non-injury than at this time last year.

Arrests, citations, and warnings are all up from last year through Monday. There have been 72 DUI arrests, an increase of 16, as well as 54 felony and 104 misdemeanor drug arrests, up 22 and 21 respectively.

The 555 total citations are 126 more than last year with total warnings up 152 at 1,625. Authorities have seized 2 cars in drug cases, one fewer than at this time a year ago.