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Car hits horse carriage, injures passengers

Natchez Democrat

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NATCHEZ — A horse-drawn carriage tour driver and some of the carriage's eight passengers sustained injuries Sunday when a 1997 Honda Civic rear-ended the carriage on Washington Street.

The driver of the car was also injured and went to the hospital, where she was issued a blood alcohol test after police suspected she was intoxicated, a Natchez Police report said.

The right front fender of the car hit the carriage's rear, left wheel at 7:40 p.m., causing damage to both.

When the car hit the carriage, the driver, Tim Buckley, was ejected from the seat and fell on the street, nearly breaking his leg, said the owner of Southern Carriage Tours, George Vines.

The horse, Hal, got scared when the car collided with the carriage and ran a block and a half down Washington Street, stopping at the depot near State and Canal streets.

Vines said the bottom of the carriage was heavily damaged and it could not move on its wheels. He said some passengers received cuts from being thrown around in the carriage. Only the driver fell out of the carriage, Vines said.

Vines said Hal luckily tore the harness when ran, so he did not drag the carriage.

The police report said the Honda Civic did not have on its headlights before the accident.

Natchez Police Department Capt. Tom McGehee said police have not received results of the test, which have to be done in a Jackson lab.

The driver, the Patricia Marceaux, 51, reportedly admitted to police she had been drinking and had had two beers.

Vines said since he started the business in 1987, no accident of this severity of Sunday's has ever happened.

He said fenders have been scraped from carriages turning too sharp, but that is the extent of the seriousness collisions in the past.

Vines said the safety of the carriage tours is a priority of his.

"I'm worried about safety all the time, that's why we stay off of Canal Street as much as we can because its just too dangerous," Vines said. "I think this girl was just blind, and she said she was drinking."