

News

Ambulance hit while responding to head-on crash; 5 hospitalized

By John Sullivan

Times Herald-Record

January 22, 2010 2:00 AM

Esopus — The driver and a crew member of an ambulance headed to a head-on collision Thursday afternoon were themselves hospitalized after a car crashed into them on a curve in the road, police said.

The ambulance carrying driver Andrew Cafaldo and Brittney Halstein, both 20 years old, was headed north on Union Center Road around 1 p.m. with its lights and siren on, when a car going in the opposite direction hit them after failing to stay in its lane around a curve.

The driver of the other vehicle, Alanna Chiausa, 21, of New Paltz, was ticketed for failing to keep right and speeding. She and the two EMS workers were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment of minor injuries.

Cafaldo and Halstein were on their way to the scene of an accident on Route 9W.

Detective Sgt. Drue Lynch of the Ulster County Sheriff's Office said the accident occurred when Hunter Falek, 23, of Kerhonkson, drove a 1991 Oldsmobile carrying passenger Jessica Hansen, 20, of Dover Plains, across the double lines into the path of a 2005 Chevrolet pickup truck driven by 58-year-old Robert Feller of Red Hook.

According to witnesses, Feller tried to avoid the car by swerving into the northbound lane, only to have Falek swing back into the same lane and strike him head on, Lynch said.

Falek and Feller were taken by ambulance to St. Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie with leg injuries and chest pain, respectively, police said. Hansen had to be flown to the trauma center at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla for treatment of head and leg injuries. Her condition was unknown Thursday night.

jsullivan@th-record.com