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Matthews preliminary examination adjourned for now



News photo by Kayla Wikaryasz On Wednesday, Devin Matthews, 23, was in the 88th District Court during his preliminary examination on Wednesday. He faces charges stemming from a fatal crash in Alpena on March 11, 2024.

ALPENA — Devin Matthews, 23, charged with two counts of second degree murder, two counts of involuntary manslaughter, two counts of OWI (Operating While Intoxicated) causing death, two counts of reckless driving causing death, one count OWI causing serious injury, and one count reckless driving causing serious impairment of a body function, attended a preliminary examination on Wednesday in the 88th District Court.

Judge Alan Curtis presided.

The examination began on Tuesday at 9 a.m. and was adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m. before defense and prosecution could finish questioning witnesses.

In total, eight witnesses took the stand on Wednesday with a future date to finish preliminary examinations pending.

Troopers from the Michigan State Police (MSP) Alpena Post investigated a fatal vehicle crash which occurred on March 11, 2024, on U.S.-23 South, near Partridge Point Road in Alpena, according to an MSP press release from January.

The release stated at approximately 7:48 p.m. on March 11, troopers responded to a report of a two-vehicle personal injury crash and a preliminary investigation indicated that a pickup truck with three occupants was traveling south on U.S.-23 when it crossed the centerline and collided with a northbound Chevrolet SUV.

The pickup truck was driven by a then-21-year-old Harrisville man, according to MSP. His passengers included a then-19-year-old man from Ossineke in the front seat and a then-21-year-old man from Lincoln in the back seat. The SUV was driven by a then-28-year-old man from Ossineke.

MSP reported that the 19-year-old passenger in the pickup truck was pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the SUV was extracted from his vehicle and later died at the hospital. The driver of the pickup truck and his other passenger, the 21-year-old man from Lincoln, were both transported to MyMichigan Medical Center in Alpena and treated for serious injuries.

The state police continued its investigation into the cause of the crash, according to the release. The troopers' findings were submitted to the Alpena Prosecutor's Office for review.

MSP Trooper Brett Immel was among the witnesses who testified under oath on Wednesday.

Immel said he has been a trooper for four years and the March 11 crash was the first fatal vehicle crash he had responded to in his career thus far.

"I first recall seeing two vehicles in the northbound lane," he said. "The vehicles appeared to be in a head on collision."

MSP Trooper and Evidence Tech Alex Karsten was also questioned to give testimony. Karsten was questioned regarding two canisters of nitrous oxide and three nozzle attachments he documented in the pickup truck that Matthews was driving.

Karsten said that he was assigned to document the evidence from the pickup truck which had been kept at Georgie's Towing after the crash on May 11. Karsten took the evidence photos on May 17.

Mathews' defense attorney John Freeman questioned Karsten to ascertain whether he lifted fingerprints from the nitrous oxide canisters.

“I did not do that,” Karsten said. “I was not asked to ... that was not my assignment.”

Karsten added that he collected DNA off of the steering wheel.

He explained that he took photos of the canisters and a bottle of liquor as they were items of interest in an OWI case.

Freeman said that a significant point of contention in the defense’s case is to determine who in the vehicle was holding the canister at the time of the collision. Freeman asked Karsten if he wanted to collect fingerprints from the canisters he could have.

A date has not been set yet for when Matthews’ preliminary exam will continue.

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