



'We were in the right place to help'; Maple Grove family aids victims in fiery fatal crash

by Aaron Brom

(Created: Tuesday, September 15, 2009 3:56 PM CDT)

"Be Prepared."

That's a motto upheld by generations of Boy Scouts, and it was in full play as a Maple Grove father and his three scout sons came to the aid of victims in a head-on crash that killed two people.

Andy Lindsay and sons Steve, 21, and twins Chris and Dan, 17, were on a family backpacking trip in Montana in July and were driving to Glacier National Park on Hwy. 87 when they came upon a fiery crash less than a minute after impact.

"We were on the way to Great Falls, Mont., there were two lanes, we came in a valley and could see there was a head-on collision," Steve Lindsay said. "There was already another commuter there who pulled over, but he was in shock and was just staring. Three cars had injured folks and one car was on fire."

The car on fire was a Jeep driven by a 51-year-old man who was trapped in the vehicle. Montana Highway Patrol later said the Jeep crossed the median and struck a pick-up truck head-on and continued rolling over, ultimately striking a mini-van that was behind the pick-up truck.

"I got (son) Steve to get some first aid," Lindsay said. "I went out and started to assess what was going on. The first vehicle closest to us was the pickup. The driver was unconscious and his wife was trapped."

The pick-up driver, a 61-year-old man, was dead at the scene.

The driver of the Jeep was partially ejected, was stuck and had a serious head injury.

"We pulled back the roof and got a hold of (the Jeep driver's) arms and pulled him clear of the fire," Lindsay said. As heroic as their efforts were, the Jeep driver would later die after being airlifted to a hospital.

Back at the scene, a truck driver who pulled over and Steve Lindsay extracted the trapped woman from the pickup. She was transported to a hospital and was in stable condition.

The mini van that was struck had also caught fire but two women escaped with no serious injuries.

"We had brought along a number of plastic bottles with ice," Lindsay said. "It was so hot. We used that water to keep the victims cool. The first aid kit was very useful."

The Lindsays stayed on scene for about four hours, providing interviews to the State Patrol and filling out witness statements.

Lindsay said he believes his sons' scouting experience was beneficial in preparing for this tragedy. Lindsay is an assistant scoutmaster with Maple Grove Troop 531, Steve has an Eagle ranking, and Chris is working on his Eagle rank.

"I feel pretty good we were in the right place to help," Lindsay said. "We all had at least basic first aid training. That training, as well as knowing what equipment to bring backpacking, I think was very helpful in this situation."

Lindsay said it took a while for he and his sons to get over the tragedy.

"It was hard to sleep for a while, but looking back I was happy we were able to help in the way we did," he said. "The rest of the trip went well, we were able to put the tragedy behind us. But I look to the fact that we were able to provide assistance."

Lindsay said that he and his sons are taking away a positive message that they were able to help others while risking their own safety.

"A lot of people just stood by," he said. "You should be willing to help when the need arises. We thought it

This site and its contents Copyright © 2005. Sun Newspapers 763-425-3323 sunpressmail@acnpapers.com

