

Howell, Rosa (NHTSA)

From: Clarence Ditlow <cmdiii@autosafety.org>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2013 3:09 PM
To: Hershman, Larry (NHTSA)
Cc: Michael Brooks
Subject: Tracked Down Article on Liberty Fire Fatality on Our Website.

██████████ is the mother - here is the article with her daughter's name.

By CALEB FREY
Staff Reporter

LAPLACE - A three-vehicle crash in the early morning hours Tuesday resulted in the death of a Destrehan woman and left another driver facing negligent homicide charges, according to State Police.

Troopers investigated the scene of the fatal accident at approximately 6:30 a.m. on October 31.

██████████, 32, suffered fatal injuries as a result of the crash and was pronounced dead on the scene by authorities.

The accident occurred on Interstate 10 heading eastbound near old Highway 51, only a couple miles from the LaPlace exit.

The three vehicles involved in the crash were all on the I-10 traveling towards New Orleans when two of the vehicles involved stopped near an overpass. The first vehicle, a gray Pontiac Solstice driven by ██████████, 35, of Gonzales, came to a stop on the interstate with ██████████ also coming to a full stop while driving a silver Jeep Liberty directly behind him.

Both vehicles were sitting on the grade of the I-10 when they were struck from behind by a white F-150 driven by ██████████, 37, of Baton Rouge, authorities said.

Upon impact, both the F-150 and the Jeep Liberty were engulfed in flames. The Pontiac Solstice was struck from the rear by the Liberty as a result of the crash, but ██████████, the driver of the Pontiac, walked away with no injuries.

Thibodaux came away from the accident with minor injuries and was taken to River Parishes Hospital for treatment. He was charged with careless operation and negligent homicide.

All parties involved in the crash were wearing their seatbelts and alcohol is not suspected to be a factor, according to State Police.

The investigation is being handled by Trooper Larry Mayes.

10/31/06 F FARS Laplace I-10 1 2004 Liberty 220571

██████████
Metairie, LA
USA

Problem Description

•Problem Description:

My beautiful 32-yr. old daughter was killed as a result of an automobile accident on October 31, 2006. She was rear-ended on Interstate-10 by a man driving a Ford F-150 pick-up truck. The vehicle she was driving, a 2004 Jeep Liberty,

burst into flames upon impact and my daughter was burned to death. Since my daughter's death, I have learned that this same thing has happened before and Chrysler has had numerous law suits that were settled out of court. The problem is, the fuel tank and filler neck on the Jeep Liberty (and Jeep Grand Cherokee) was designed and installed in a location (behind the rear bumper) that is susceptible to rupture or puncture in a rear-end collision. When gasoline escapes from a ruptured or punctured fuel tank, a high risk of fire and explosion exists. Chrysler knows full well about this problem, but apparently it is cheaper for them to settle out of court than to change the design of the vehicle. Because of this terrible tragedy and tremendous loss of such a beautiful life, I feel an obligation to warn everyone of the potential danger when driving these vehicles. The public has a right to know BEFORE they purchase these vehicles. It was also determined that her seat belt failed by the way her seat fell all the way back when she was hit.

Vehicle Information

- Make: Jeep
- Model: Liberty
- Year: 2004
- VIN: 1J4GK48K04W [REDACTED]