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Metro

Fatal crashes mar Labor Day weekend in N.E.

By **Matt Rocheleau, Katherine Landergan and Travis Andersen** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS | GLOBE STAFF
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Four Massachusetts residents and a New Hampshire woman died in car crashes across the region over the Labor Day weekend. Authorities said two of the seven serious accidents that were reported involved alcohol.

In Littleton, a man from Dunstable and a woman from Groton, both in their early 20s, died when they were thrown from a pickup truck after it struck a utility pole and flipped several times on Great Road Sunday morning, authorities said.

Town police Sergeant Robert Romilly said the driver of the 2001 Ford F-350 is believed to have been speeding when the truck veered off the road while making a turn about 5:20 a.m. The driver was hospitalized and is expected to recover, police said.

No charges had been filed as of Sunday evening, according to Stephanie Chelf Guyotte, a spokeswoman for

the Middlesex district attorney's office. Authorities declined to identify the victims and the driver.

In Biddeford, Maine, Anthony Ciccone, 20, of Pepperell, Mass., died after the sport utility vehicle he was riding in crashed into a utility pole about 12:45 a.m. on Sunday, according to city police.

The Ford Explorer was driven by Christopher M. Bennett, 20, of Johnston R.I., who was treated for injuries from which he is expected to recover. He has been charged with manslaughter and operating under the influence, Biddeford police said in a statement.

Just before the crash, police received a call from security personnel at the University of New England reporting that two men "were reportedly intoxicated and trying to forcibly enter a residence hall dorm room," the statement said.

Campus security were unable to stop the men from driving away, according to the statement. Biddeford officers then spotted a dark-colored Ford Explorer, which matched the description that campus security had provided, traveling at an estimated 80 miles per hour in a 30 mile-per-hour zone, police said.

An officer was unable to stop the car before it crashed, the statement said.

Bennett and Ciccone were not students at the university, but police said they were reportedly visiting friends in the area.

"We have no indication they were drinking at UNE," Thomas White, a university spokesman, wrote in an e-mail.

In Melrose, a Stoneham man allegedly drove a sedan into a motorcycle before running over the motorcyclist several times and then driving away, authorities said, citing witness accounts.

Eugene LeDonne, 76, has been charged with leaving the scene of an accident, the district attorney office spokeswoman said.

The male motorcyclist was hospitalized with serious injuries, Melrose police said in a statement.

Both vehicles were stopped at a red light at the intersection of Main, Franklin and Green streets at about 8:15 a.m. Sunday, police said in a statement. When the light turned green, the sedan struck the motorcycle



in front of it, knocking the motorcyclist to the ground, the statement said.

Authorities said LeDonne then briefly got out of his car before driving away. Authorities declined to comment further Sunday evening.

In Uxbridge, town resident Robert W. Drtina, 54, was killed after the motorcycle he was riding collided with a sport utility vehicle about 6:20 p.m. Sunday, police spokeswoman Melanie Blodgett-O'Toole said. The accident is under investigation, she said.

In Concord, N.H., early Sunday, a 19-year-old woman was killed when the stolen 2012 Chevrolet Impala that she was riding in crashed during a police pursuit, authorities said.

Paige E. Garneau of Laconia, N.H., was a passenger in the Impala when it crashed about 2:50 a.m. after going off the road on an offramp on Interstate 93 south in Concord, according to a statement from New Hampshire State Police.

Garneau was pronounced dead at Concord Hospital. The driver of the vehicle, Robert M. Pitts, 18, of Weare, N.H., faces several charges, including negligent homicide and disobeying a police officer resulting in personal injury, the statement said.

In Carver, an off-duty firefighter helped rescue a man whose truck had veered into a pond Saturday night in an accident that authorities believe was alcohol-related, town police said in a statement.

Neighbors pulled Peter Grover, 66, of Kingston, from a pond near 208 Plymouth St. after the 1994 Ford Ranger pickup he was driving went into the water shortly after 7:30 p.m., the statement from Carver Police said.

Town firefighter Adam Johnson performed CPR on Grover, who was breathing on his own by the time paramedics arrived, the statement said.

Carver Police Sergeant Raymond Orr said Grover was not arrested because of his condition, but was issued a criminal citation. Orr declined to specify what the citation was for.

State Police said a Charlestown man will face charges after he led troopers on a chase on Route 3 southbound before crashing in Kingston on Sunday afternoon. The driver, Michael J. Millerick, 56, was hospitalized with injuries that are not life-threatening.

State Police spokesman David Procopio, reacting to the wave of accidents, warned motorists to temper their celebration of the Labor Day holiday.

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