

By LARRY PHILLIPS

• Leader & Times

An 80-year-old Liberal man was severely injured early Wednesday morning when his pickup veered into the path of an oncoming tractor-trailer semi north of Liberal.

Stanley H. Wilbers was driving his 2010 Toyota Tacoma pickup northbound on U.S. Highway 83 3.5 miles north of Liberal when he veered across the center line and struck a southbound semi, according to a report from the Kansas Highway Patrol.

At around 5:10 a.m., the report noted Wilbers struck the semi, which was trying to avoid the collision by moving to its right, "behind the driver's side front tire and the semi driver's tires appeared to drive over" Wilbers' vehicle.

According to emergency dispatcher's radio traffic, Wilbers had to be extricated from the vehicle mechanically before he could be transported to Southwest Medical Center, where he was then transferred to a Wichita hospital. Efforts to find out the status of Wilbers were unsuccessful as of press time.

The driver of the 2003 Peterbilt semi, Marco Covarrubias-Esparza, 27, also of Liberal, was not injured in the incident.

Traffic on Hwy. 83 had to be re-routed for approximately five hours while cleanup took place.

## **Semi-pickup collision severely injures Liberal man**

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The KHP report noted Covarrubias-Esparza was wearing his seatbelt, while Wilbers was not.