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Oakland County news: Sneezy driving is no excuse in Orion Township

COMPILED FROM REPORTS BY ROBIN ERB AND TAMMY STABLES BATTAGLIA

ORION TOWNSHIP: Sneezy driving is no excuse

Sneezing three times in a row wasn't a sufficient excuse to get a driver off the hook after he caused a crash at 4 p.m. Sunday in Orion Township that sent eight people including an infant to the hospital.

The driver told officers he was forced by his sneezing to close his eyes, after which he rear-ended a car, then slid into opposing traffic and stuck another vehicle, police said. He was cited for continuing to drive "while unable to stop in an assured clear distance" from other vehicles, said Lt. Gordon Pizzini of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

All injuries in the three-car crash were minor, Pizzini said Monday.

Michigan Secretary of State spokesman Ken Silfven said: "I don't believe that the Michigan Vehicle Code addresses sneezing."

WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP: Chairlift fire won't affect Alpine Valley skiing

All ski hills at Alpine Valley Ski Area are expected to be open this season even though a fire Saturday destroyed a shed housing \$80,000 in chairlift equipment.

"It's just a little setback for us," Alpine's manager, Kevin Schons, said Monday. "We're going to keep moving forward."

He said all electricity is off to the sites' hills, including the shed housing electrical components for the four-man chairlift on the Everest hill.

White Lake Township Fire Department Lt. Jim Thompson said Monday that the 15-by-20-foot shed burned to the ground during the 3:40 p.m. fire at 6775 Highland Road. The Oakland County Sheriff's Office accelerant-detecting arson dog assisted at the scene.

Uniforms for students: After a plea for help was published last week in the Free Press, donors made sure that about three dozen homeless children at Pontiac's Grace Centers of Hope won't go without school uniforms.

More than \$3,000 has been raised from individuals -- including Free Press readers -- to buy uniforms for about half the children, and another 17 new uniforms are to be presented today by Taylor-based Arrow Uniforms, Grace Centers of Hope spokeswoman Michelle Atwell said Monday.

Robotics season: The Oakland County Competitive Robotics Association is kicking off its 10th season Wednesday, giving students, teachers and coaches a chance to see what the game will be like this year.

So far, teams from 20 schools across the county have signed on for the competition, which involves building robots that are to compete in a series of tournaments set to begin Oct. 24.
