

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Perkins and Keith County deputies assisted the Nebraska State Patrol in a high speed chase on Tuesday night Dec. 7, which ended in gunfire between troopers and the suspect.

According to information from the Nebraska State Patrol, Mark Phillips, 39, of Louisville, Colo., had been stopped by a state trooper for speeding along U.S. Highway 61 south of Ogallala around 8 p.m.

Phillips allegedly sped away in the 1999 Dodge Durango he was driving after a brief encounter with the trooper.

Public information coordinator Deb Collins of the state patrol said a pursuit followed southwest of Ogallala with speeds averaging between 75 to 90 miles per hour.

Perkins County and Keith County law enforcement were dispatched to assist in the high speed chase.

Phillips crashed his vehicle five miles southwest of Brule and fled on foot.

A passenger, 33-year-old Scott Suedekum of Big Springs, was arrested and taken to the Keith County Jail for being a felon in possession of a firearm, according to Collins.

Keith and Perkins County deputies joined in a two-hour search for Phillips, whom they believed to be armed.

According to Chief Deputy Kip Bradley of the Perkins County Sheriff's Office, he, Sergeant Kris Larson and Deputy Blake Smidt took part in the search for the suspect west of the crash while troopers searched on the east side.

When Phillips was found in a ditch 400 yards east of the wreck, he allegedly fired two shots at state patrol officers with a .38 caliber pistol. Officers returned fire, wounding Phillips. He was transported by ambulance to the Ogallala Community Hospital and was later airlifted to Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff.

According to Collins, Phillips underwent surgery at Regional West for gunshot wounds in his neck and legs. He was listed in stable condition following surgery.

State patrol personnel were unharmed.

An investigation of the incident continues.