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LOCAL NEWS

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Tuesday, April 12, 2005

CP man dies after crash with bus
Wesley Woods was riding his motorcycle when the collision,
at Isaacs Avenue and Main Street, occurred.

By Terry McConn of the Union-Bulletin

Staff members at Whitman College are mourning the death of a valued colleague who died Monday after the motorcycle he was riding collided with a Valley Transit bus near the college campus.

Wesley A. Woods, 60, of 555 S.W. Third St., College Place, was pronounced dead at St. Mary Medical Center at 4:20 p.m., about three hours after the collision at Isaacs Avenue and Main Street occurred.

Woods, a computer systems specialist at Whitman, died after surgery that revealed he suffered massive internal injuries in the crash, according to Walla Walla County Coroner Frank Brown. An autopsy will be conducted Wednesday afternoon to determine the exact extent of injuries, Brown said.

Walla Walla police said Woods was driving his 2001 Honda motorcycle east on Isaacs, approaching the intersection with Main, about 1:04 p.m.

The full-sized 2002 Valley Transit bus was heading west on Isaacs in the left turn lane and began turning across the eastbound lanes onto Main. Woods, who was wearing a helmet, wasn't able to avoid the bus and skidded into the right rear panel, according to the police report.

The bus driver, Tracey L. Eytchison, 49, and about eight to 10 passengers who were on the bus weren't hurt, officials said.

The roadway was blocked for about four hours as police took measurements and gathered information to reconstruct why the

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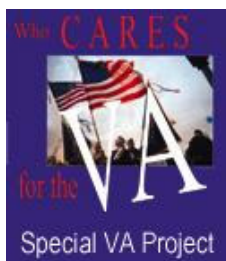
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collision occurred. It may take some time to complete the investigation and determine further details, according to police.

Whitman College President Tom Cronin issued the following statement this morning: ``All of us at Whitman are extremely sad at the passing of a dear friend. Wes was greatly valued as a colleague and a friend to everyone who knew him at Whitman. He was an expert at computer systems who over the past 14 or 15 years was an instrumental part of a team in operational technology at Whitman College.'

Keiko Pitter, Whitman's chief technology officer, said this morning Woods was a client services consultant who advised students, faculty and staff about computer operations.

``Wes loved his motorcycle, and he was really into sailing,' Pitter said. A man of eclectic interests, he ``loved arguing politics' and enjoyed photography as a hobby, according to Pitter.

Apparently the crash happened as Woods was returning to work after lunch, said Pitter, who saw the aftermath of the crash.

``He was just the sweetest person,' she added. Her staff consists of 20 people, ``So we work very closely together. It's going to be felt quite deeply,' Pitter said.

Woods' survivors include his wife, Toni; a daughter, Jennifer Pinder of Oklahoma; and a son, James Woods of Vancouver, Wash., Pitter said.

Police officials today were continuing to interview witnesses and are seeking additional people who saw the crash. Anyone with information is asked to call 527-4434.

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