



**BENNINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
118 SOUTH STREET
BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201**

**PAUL J. DOUCETTE
CHIEF OF POLICE**

Press Release:

Date: Monday, January 11, 2021

Re: Motor Vehicle Crash/Recovery of Operator

On Friday January 8, 2021 at approximately 6:29 PM, Bennington Police responded to a rollover crash on Route 279 in the area of the Austin Hill overpass. Upon arrival, police located a Nissan pick-up truck with severe damage. Several witnesses on scene advised that a male, later identified as Hans Heck, 35, of Bennington, Vermont had fled the crash scene. Investigation revealed that the operator fled on foot south of Route 279 into the woods. Bennington Police K-9 officer conducted a track of the suspected operator south of Route 279 before the track was lost due to a high fence and dangerous conditions. The track and search for the male was terminated due officer. Officer remained in the area of the crash scene for approximately two hours. Throughout the night, Officers patrolled the area of Route 279 and surrounding roads, but were not able to locate the operator.

On Sunday, January 10 2021, Bennington Police were contacted by friends and family of Hans Heck advising that no one has had contact with Heck since the night of the crash. Bennington Police Officers returned to the scene a searched the area to search for Heck until after dark. The search was once again terminated.

On Monday January 11, 2021, Bennington Police Officers with the assistance of family friends and surrounding agencies began searching the last know area for Heck. Friends has entered the woods early Monday morning to search for Heck. K-9 units from Bennington Police, Winhall Police, Williamstown Police and Bennington County Sheriff's Department were organized to assist in the search. We were also assisted by a Game Warden from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and Vermont State Police.

The New York State Police Aviation Unit was contacted to assist with the search. The NYSP helicopter was able to locate an area of interest and officers entered the wooded area and located Hans Heck, who was deceased. Heck's body was found in a heavily wooded area approximately 200 yards from Route 279. Bennington Fire Department assisted in the removal of Heck's body. Heck's body will be transported to the Vermont Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation, should contact Sgt. Harrington at 802-442-1030.