



BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Frederick J. Akshar II

Undersheriff Sammy L. Davis

155 Lt. Van Winkle Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905

For Immediate Release:

May 8, 2023

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BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

Update on I-88 W Accident Leaving Car in Chenango River

(TOWN OF FENTON) On May 5th, 2023 around 11:40 am, Broome County Sheriff's Deputies responded to reports of a vehicle in the Chenango River off of Interstate Route 88 westbound near Exit 3.

Community members stopping near the accident reported a male and female on the roof of the vehicle, a 2001 Honda sedan, floating down the river. The vehicle was reported to be sinking as the high and swift current carried the vehicle down river.

The driver, Colby Degnan, and passenger Colleen Bobola, both age 21 and both of Johnson City, were able to escape the sinking vehicle and climb onto the roof. As the vehicle completely submerged, both attempted to swim to shore. While Bobola was able to make it to shore, the strong currents swept Degnan further down the Chenango River.

After making it to shore, Bobola called 911 and provided real-time updates on the location of Degnan so responding deputies could locate him. A short time later, Broome County Sheriff's Deputy Mark Hamilton spotted Degnan being tossed by the currents and grabbed a rescue line before jumping into the river. Dep. Hamilton successfully brought Degnan back to shore, but he was unresponsive. Dep. Hamilton, along with Broome County Sheriff's Detective Matt Barcak immediately began CPR on Degnan and continued until EMS arrived.

Colby Degnan was subsequently transported to Wilson Hospital where he remains in critical condition. Colleen Bobola was taken to Wilson Hospital for minor injuries and released.

The preliminary investigation revealed the vehicle Colby was operating veered across the highway, stuck a guiderail just west of the Exit 3 on-ramp for I-88 westbound, and landed in the river.

The vehicle has been located by members of the Sheriff's Office utilizing a drone, however, due to the hazardous river conditions, the recovery has been delayed until the water level drops.

General Information:
(607) 778-1911

Fiscal:
(607) 778-2928

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(607) 778-2926

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(607) 778-2145

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(607) 778-2924

Records:
(607) 778-2166

The Broome County Sheriff's Accident Reconstruction Unit is currently investigating the accident.

The sheriff's office was assisted by NYS DOT, Port Crane Fire Department, and Broome Volunteer Ambulance.

“Deputy Hamilton acted quickly and courageously, putting his own life at risk to rescue Colby Degnan from drowning in the Chenango River,” said Sheriff Fred Akshar. “We’ve been informed by medical staff that the CPR performed by Dep. Hamilton and Detective Barcak on Colby once he was ashore saved this young man’s life. These acts of unquestionable bravery and resilience are exactly why our community depends on the heroic men and women of the Broome County Sheriff’s Office to help keep our families safe. Dep. Hamilton and Det. Barcak’s actions have made our entire team and this entire community exceedingly proud, and our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Degnan and his family for a full and swift recovery.”

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