

## Two Motorcyclists Killed After Fleeing Blowing Rock

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Two Catawba County residents, chased on their motorcycle first by Blowing Rock Police, then other agencies through Caldwell County, died after their motorcycle hit a car near Granite Falls just before noon yesterday. Trooper Chris Bentley said the fatal crash happened at 11:45 a.m.

after the chase started—then was discontinued by law enforcement officers, starting with Blowing Rock Police, who spotted the cycle speeding and weaving through traffic there. The officer alerted another BRPD officer, who spotted the motorcycle near the Outback Steakhouse on U.S. 321, and they began pursuit. BRPD chased the motorcycle down the mountain but discontinued the chase once they were inside the city limits of Lenoir. But near there, a sergeant with Caldwell County Sheriff's Office briefly continued the chase south of Lenoir, but he also broke off the pursuit. It was near Walmart at Glenridge Drive that the crash occurred—and not during any active chase by law enforcement. Bentley said a woman was making a left turn onto U.S. 321 north, and as she pulled out, her car was hit by the motorcycle traveling an estimated 120 miles per hour at the time. Both riders were killed, identified by the state patrol as driver John Franklin, 35, of Claremont, and his passenger Allison Nixon, 22, of Conover. The airbags of the car deployed and the driver suffered minor burns from the airbags.