



# Media Release

For Immediate Release: January 24, 2024  
Contact: Lieutenant Bradley Bishop

## Patrol Investigates Fatal Crash Involving Church Bus and Passenger Car

Green Township- On Wednesday January 24, 2024 at approximately 6:15 p.m. the Ashland Highway Patrol Post was advised of an injury crash involving a church bus and a passenger car on State Route 39 near Township Road 749. A 2015 Chevrolet Equinox was operated southbound on State Route 39 by 71-year-old Rickie Bilger of Loudonville, Ohio. A 2011 Thomas Built bus was operated northbound on State Route 39 by 68-year-old David Switzer of Loudonville, Ohio. The Chevrolet and Thomas Built bus collided within the middle of both travel lanes. The Thomas Built traveled off of the west edge of State Route 39, struck a ditch line and came to rest. The Equinox was redirected facing northbound and came to rest in the southbound travel lane adjacent to the west edge of State Route 39. There were four passengers on the bus and one occupant was taken to Wooster Community Hospital by Loudonville Fire Department. Bilger was taken by Perrysville Fire Department to Ohio Health Mansfield and was pronounced deceased.

Bilger was not wearing a safety belt at the time of the crash. Drugs and/or alcohol are not suspected as factors in the crash. The Ohio State Highway Patrol was assisted on scene by the Ashland County Sheriff's Office, Loudonville Police Department, Perrysville Fire Department, Loudonville Fire Department, and Bate's Garage and Towing. State Route 39 was closed for approximately 2 hours while the crash was investigated and the vehicles recovered from the area.

The crash remains under investigation at this time.

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Ohio State Highway Patrol



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