

Gallup man takes NMSP on 120 mph chase

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 26 February 2021 05:08

Anthony Palacios, 45, of Gallup, faces multiple charges following a chase that reached more than 120 miles per hour in the early morning hours on Interstate 40.

Palacios faces a felony charge of aggravated fleeing a law enforcement officer, along with reckless driving, driving while license suspended, concealing identity, speeding, driving on a divided highway, driving on roadways laned for traffic, vehicles entering stop or yield intersection, failure to use proper turn signals, possession of marijuana up to half an ounce, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

At about 1:48 am Jan. 19, N.M. State Police Officer Alexander Apodaca was patrolling I-40 westbound when he noticed a 2000 black Suzuki Esteem pulled over onto the shoulder with its hazard lights flashing. Apodaca decided to do a welfare check, according to police reports.

As he walked up to the passenger side window, Apodaca saw a single male driver slumped over and facing downward behind the steering wheel, the report stated. He also smelled a strong odor of alcohol and marijuana coming from Palacios' car, reports state.

After providing a false name, Palacios started to drive away at a speed of more than 90 miles per hour westbound on I-40. After driving onto the median, Palacios swerved across both westbound lanes and onto the Exit 108 off-ramp, reports state.

Palacios drove north on Casa Blanca Road at about 70 miles per hour in a 25 mile per hour zone, sometimes in the southbound lane. Apodaca stated that Palacios' speed reached more than 123 miles per hour. Palacios then got back onto the interstate, driving west in the eastbound lanes, nearly crashing into three 18-wheelers.

Laguna police began chasing Palacios, according to reports, and found Palacios' car a mile up the road. Palacios had run away from the car. Because Palacios was not a member of the Laguna tribe, Apodaca once again became involved. Apodaca found a bong along with a green leafy substance underneath the stereo. He also found a pack of unopened vodka bottles behind the driver's front seat.

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The police report states that Apodaca knew Palacios, and an arrest warrant was later served. Even before the incident, Palacios had three outstanding warrants for his arrest.