

O Christmas tree



MARNI SPECK/DN

JIM AND SANDY LAVELLE cut down a Christmas tree at Pinehill Acres, 87th and O Streets. Pinehill Acres, owned by Earl and Carol Lampshire, is open from 3 p.m. until dusk Monday through Friday and noon until dusk Saturday and Sunday.

Fremont couple killed in automobile accident

Their daughter left in family members' hands

NORFOLK (AP) - News of a car accident on an ice-slickened highway that killed a young Fremont couple left their family reeling and their tiny daughter's future uncertain.

Chris Vandersnick, 24, and his wife, Elizabeth, 20, were driving on U.S. Highway 275 near Pilger about 7 p.m. Friday when temperatures dropped and roads began to ice, said Stanton County Sheriff Mike Unger.

The couple were killed instantly when their 1989 two-door Chevrolet Beretta slid out of control and into the path of a Ford Explorer. The couple's 2-year-old daughter, Emily, was injured.

Doctors listed Emily's condition as fair and moved her out of the pediatric intensive care unit at Omaha's University Hospital on Saturday, said spokesman Tom O'Connor.

Emily, who suffered serious head injuries in the accident, initially was taken to a Norfolk hospital. She was transferred in a medical helicopter to the Omaha hospital, Unger said.

The driver of the second car, Doug Beyer, 39, of La Vista was in stable condition at Faith Regional Health Services Saturday.

At the time of the accident, the young family was heading to Ewing where Vandersnick's parents have a home and a ranch.

"Emily loved going to the ranch and seeing all the cows," said Michelle Davis Kerr of Hastings, Elizabeth Vandersnick's sister. Family members had not yet decided Saturday who would care for Emily.

"But she has a good, supportive family who will make sure she is taken care of," said Erich Davis of Fremont, Elizabeth Vandersnick's brother.

The Vandersnicks were married in July and seemed to have so many things going their way, family members said.

"*Their faces would light up every time they talked about Emily.***"**

REV. MIKE ECKLEY

"They definitely were looking forward to the future," said Rob Kerr, Elizabeth Vandersnick's brother-in-law.

The couple met a few years ago in Fremont while Chris Vandersnick was attending Midland Lutheran College and Elizabeth Vandersnick was in high school.

When Elizabeth Vandersnick became pregnant, both families offered a lot of support, Michelle Kerr said.

"They had some rough spots in their relationship early on, but they were very hopeful," said the Rev. Mike Eckley, associate pastor of Fremont's St. Patrick Catholic Church.

"Their faces would light up every time they talked about Emily," said Eckley, who married the couple. "It wasn't what they planned, but they couldn't imagine their lives without her."

Chris Vandersnick graduated from Midland in 1995 and hoped eventually to get a teaching job. After earning his bachelor's degree, he worked at Elkhorn Manor Nursing Center, where he helped organize activities for the residents.

Elizabeth Vandersnick worked at an Omaha-area music store while pursuing training to become a dental hygienist.

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