

Driver to stand trial in teen's death

Ambulance collision with pregnant girl's car blamed for demise

BY TERESA CANDORI
OF THE PATRIOT-NEWS

The driver of an ambulance that hit a car in September, killing a pregnant teen-age driver, has been ordered to stand trial on vehicular homicide charges.

Rodney D. Bucher Jr., 26, of Rolo Court, Upper Allen Twp., allegedly told a medic at the scene of the Sept. 13 accident that he was "traveling hot" - using lights and sirens - when the ambulance hit a car in front of it on Route 322 in South Annville Twp.

The car hit a telephone pole, killing the driver, Jennifer L. Jordan, 18, of Campbelltown.

District Justice Lee Lehman ruled yesterday that Lebanon

County Assistant District Attorney Scott Grenoble had presented enough evidence to send the case to county court.

Bucher was a driver for Hanover Twp.'s Emergency Medical Service, a private, for-profit, non-emergency transportation service. At the time of the crash, he was returning a Middletown man to a retirement home following cataract surgery in Lebanon.

"If the lights and sirens were on, it was a mistake," said Bucher's lawyer, Patrick F. Lauer Jr. "I don't think there's any proof that the siren was the cause of the crash."

Grenoble presented testimony from two witnesses who said the ambulance appeared to be speeding, and weaving in and out of traffic.

Josh Boger, 16, of Annville, was in the back seat of the car Jordan was driving. He said that the car slowed almost to a

stop and pulled to the side of the road but hadn't pulled completely off the road.

Under cross-examination, Boger said the car may have come to a complete stop, but he didn't think so.

Lauer's contends that Jordan, panicked by the approaching ambulance, stopped suddenly, causing the crash.

"It is a tragedy," Lauer said. "My client feels terrible about the death in this case."

Bucher, surrounded by family, wiped tears from his eyes throughout the two-hour hearing.

Across the courtroom, Jordan's mother, Diana Jordan, sobbed.

"Christmas and New Year's is coming up," she said after the hearing. "New Year's would have been her birthday. He still has his kids. I lost my daughter and my grandchild because of carelessness."