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News

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CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO (AP) - A car with a trailer full of alligators was involved in a crash on Interstate 55 Saturday evening.



According to the Cape Girardeau Police Department, two crashes happened near mile marker 96 in the southbound lanes. Both happened at around 7 p.m.

Four alligators ranging from three to five feet long were hauled in a little trailer behind one of the cars.

Wheston Whitt and his wife, both from Alabama, were in the car that had the alligators in it.

They were both injured from the wreck.

Whitt has a big gash on his head after the crash, but he's overwhelmed by the kindness of strangers helping him through a tough time.

Whitt plans to use the gators he bought and take them to children's hospitals around the country.

But the crash put kink in his plans. He and his wife got out of the wreck, but something had to be done with the alligators while Wheston went to the hospital for treatment.

That's where Todd and Vicki Lantz at the Lazy L. Safari stepped in to care for the gators.

The alligators were transported to Lazy L. Safari in Cape Girardeau for care until the owner can pick them up.

"When they showed up at my door today, Todd's exact words was 'Vicki and I will be right out,'" Whetson Whitt said. "And I've never met these people. He said we've got your luggage. We've got your gators. We've got them in a warming room. They're safe and sound. He said, 'You guys stay here, get some rest. Vicki and I are on our way.'"

Whitt says a truck driver drove up on the scene, literally took the shirt off his back, and used it to help stop the bleeding on his head before emergency crews got to the scene.

Wheston and his wife say they are very grateful to those total strangers who stepped in to help. They picked up the gators early Monday afternoon and headed back home to Alabama.

Police say the animals remained inside the vehicle and never posed a threat to anyone.