

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Imperial is reeling again this week from the loss of another one of its young ones, 16-year-old Adrian Marquez.

The Chase County Schools sophomore died from injuries suffered in a Sunday night accident, northwest of Imperial on Avenue 331.

Three and a half weeks ago, 21-year-old Elisha Sanchez died in an accident near Enders. Three weeks earlier on July 13, Imperial native Debra Ridlen Palser died in an accident in Perkins County.

Young Marquez was driving a 2003 Chevy Trailblazer when he apparently lost control of the vehicle as he and a passenger were southbound on the gravel road, said State Trooper Jeff Van Stelton, who was the primary officer on the scene Sunday night.

The vehicle rolled three times into the ditch on the east side of the road, about a mile and a half north of Highway 61, ejecting both passengers, Trooper Van Stelton said. Neither was wearing a seat belt.

Marquez had extensive injuries, but the passenger, 13-year-old Rachelle Carmin of Imperial, sustained only a sprained ankle, cuts and bruises, said her grandmother Janette Carmin.

Both were taken to Chase County Community Hospital by Imperial EMS.

Rachelle, who moved to Imperial with her father, Bill, early this summer, was kept overnight for observation, her grandmother said. A flight for life was called in, but was not used.

The Chase County Sheriff's Department, Imperial Police Department and Imperial Volunteer Fire Department also assisted at the scene. The first call came in at 7:40 p.m.

The State Patrol is continuing to investigate the accident.

Son was music lover

Adrian's parents, Luciano and Norma Marquez, have lived in Imperial with their family for nine years, moving here when Adrian was seven years old.

He had just celebrated his 16th birthday on Aug. 17.

Both parents remembered their son as a lover of music.

His mother said the first thing he did in the morning was to turn on music. He preferred music by Mexican artists, and the music was also quickly turned on when he came home after school.

He also enjoyed lifting weights and running with his dad.

His mother said he had a lot of friends and always had someone over after school or in the evenings.

His dad said he will miss Adrian's personality, adding "he was a perfect son."

His dad continued, "Lots of people have told us that he was friendly and they cared about him."

Both parents expressed thanks to all in the community who have expressed their grief.

"We are happy for the help from the people in the community," said his mother.

Adrian had worked at Imperial Beef this summer, and also worked weekends during the school year.

Adrian has two sisters, Berenice, an eighth grader at Chase County Schools, and Liliana, who'll be five in October.

Grade 7-12 CCS Principal Mike Sorensen said Adrian was hard-working and was never in trouble.

"From a principal's standpoint, he was a good kid," Sorensen said.

Since his death, Sorensen said he's received many positive comments from the teachers who had him in their classes.

He also had a lot of friends at school.

"The sophomore class was devastated," Sorensen said.

After Sorensen learned of his death Sunday night, he contacted fellow members of the school's crisis team, who then met before school Monday to prepare a statement.

The statement was read in Monday's grade 7-12 first period classes. A letter to parents was also mailed out later Monday, including a pamphlet that offered tips in helping children deal with trauma and grief.

Sorensen said both school counselors were available all day Monday for students, and will continue to be in the coming days as needed.

A funeral Mass for Adrian was said Wednesday this week at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Imperial, with a service including the rosary, Scripture readings and songs held Tuesday night. Burial was in Imperial's Mount Hope Cemetery.