

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

His doctors are calling former Imperial resident Lucas Ridlen a miracle. The 27-year old Gillette, Wyo. resident was critically injured in a one-car accident last Thursday about 9:15 p.m.

According to his mother, Dottie, also of Gillette, he sustained a broken neck, broken jaw, two broken shoulder blades, broken ribs, lost part of an ear, has critically bruised lungs, lacerated spleen and liver, a leaking esophagus, a severe concussion and blood around his aorta.

She said he apparently was driving on a highway inside the Gillette city limits near the airport when the accident occurred. Ridlen was alone in the vehicle.

Dottie said the cause was unknown. "We wish we knew," she said. The vehicle apparently ejected her son, who wasn't wearing a seatbelt, upon the first roll. The vehicle then rolled two to three more times, striking him at least once.

Ridlen was unconscious when first taken to Campbell County Hospital in Gillette, then flown to the Wyoming Medical Center in Casper.

"The doctors think he's a miracle for his massive injuries," Dottie said Tuesday.

Ridlen has had surgery on his neck to fuse vertebrae, and his ear has been sewn back on. A bone chip on his spinal cord has been decompressed.

Dottie said her son was up and walking one day after the surgery to his neck.

Ridlen has been taking speech, physical and restorative therapy every day.

He was moved from Intensive Care to a neurology floor on Monday, and will probably be in the hospital for another week, she stated.

At that time, he'll be moved to an inpatient rehabilitation center, not yet determined.

Cards may be sent to him at the following address: Luke Ridlen, c/o Dottie Ridlen, PO Box 4457, Gillette, Wyo. 82717.

Dottie and husband Dennis have set up a website at carepages.com/carepages/lucasridlen for people to receive updates on their son's condition.