Two accidents on I-80 near Brady

The operator of a pavement roller in a construction zone on Interstate 80 just west of Brady escaped serious injuries last week when the machine was struck by a semi-trailer truck.

The accident occurred just before 10:30 a.m. on June 20 in the westbound lane of I-80 near mile marker 198, according to Nebraska State Patrol spokeswoman Deb Collins.

Traffic was limited in the area to one driving lane due to road construction.

Collins said the preliminary investigation indicates the pavement roller working on the construction entered the driving lane and was struck by the semi.

The pavement roller spun around a couple of times and came to rest in the driving lane while the semi stopped upright on the westbound shoulder.

The westbound lanes of I-80 were closed with traffic routed to U.S. Highway 30 for about an hour.

The driver of the pavement roller, 71-year-old Harlan Pec of St. Paul, was transported to Great Plains Regional Medical Center in North Platte with non-life threatening injuries.

The driver of the semi, Atanas Dobrey, 35, of Des Plaines, IL, was not injured.

An estimated $10,000 worth of damage was done to the semi while the roller is expected to be totaled.

The crash remains under investigation.

The accident was the second of two in the vicinity in a short period of time.

About 20 minutes earlier, a westbound semi driven by John Hoppe, 65, of Belton, MO, was struck from the rear by a pickup driven by Stephen Bandiera, 27, of Ord.

Authorities say the pickup driver was reaching for something that fell on the floor when his vehicle struck the truck.

Minor damage was done to the back of the semi but the pickup was totaled.

Neither driver was injured.