

REAL-TIME NEWS

# Palmer man sentenced to 6 to 20 years in DUI that killed 3

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By **Kurt Bresswein**, [kbresswein@lehighvalleylive.com](mailto:kbresswein@lehighvalleylive.com),  
For lehighvalleylive.com

A Palmer Township man who crashed his pickup truck on a hunting trip in Pike County, killing all three of his passengers, was sentenced Thursday to 6 to 20 years in state prison.



Thomas J. Howey Jr.  
(Courtesy photo |



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Thomas J. Howey Jr., 52, has been in the Pike County prison since pleading guilty Feb 2 to homicide by vehicle while driving under the influence of alcohol, homicide by vehicle, DUI and driving at an unsafe speed, said county First Assistant District Attorney Bruce DeSarro.

Judge Gregory H. Chelak handed down the sentence after hearing in court from family and friends of the three victims, Timothy Gerhard, 58, of Plainfield Township; Barry Foose Jr., 46, of Easton; and Eric Dunbar, 38, of Roseto.

All three were pronounced dead at the scene of the crash Nov. 29, 2015, in Greene Township.

Howey crashed his Ford F-150 into a tree while speeding.



From left, Timothy Gerhard, Barry Foose Jr. and Eric Dunbar were pronounced dead at the Nov. 29, 2015, crash in Greene Township, Pike County. (Courtesy photos | For lehighvalleylive.com)



He was able to tell Pennsylvania State Police investigators he remembered driving the three men back to his cabin on Mozette Road. It was the day before the start of Pennsylvania's two-week firearms season for white-tailed deer.

Howey admitted drinking four to five beers at Renegades Saloon in nearby Newfoundland, Pennsylvania, prior to the crash. A server at the bar when interviewed by police corroborated the claim.

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Howey and Gerhard worked together at Asbury Graphite Mills in Franklin Township, Warren County. Howey was a foreman who had worked for the company for more than 30 years. Gerhard was the plant manager and worked there 40 years, according to his family. The pair often hunted together.

Foose was married to Howey's cousin. Dunbar was a friend of Foose's whom he had just introduced to the others.

Pike County District Attorney Ray Tonkin prosecuted the case.

"I can say that we're satisfied with the sentence and that hopefully not only this sentence but also the circumstances of the harm that occurred to these families serves as a



lesson to people about the horrors of drunken driving," DeSarro told lehighvalleylive.com.

Howey's wife spoke on his behalf at sentencing. Afterward, he was returned to the county prison to await transfer to a state prison.

He was also ordered to pay \$5,000 through the state Crime Victims Act, according to DeSarro.

Howey's Easton-based attorney, Robert Eyer, did not immediately return a call for comment on the sentence.

*Kurt Bresswein may be reached at [kbresswein@lehighvalleylive.com](mailto:kbresswein@lehighvalleylive.com). Follow him on Twitter [@KurtBresswein](#) and [Facebook](#). Find [lehighvalleylive.com](#) on [Facebook](#).*

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