

One dead, two injured in homemade plane crash

by Cheryl McDermott

KNOX CITY, Mo. - A woman was killed and two men seriously injured Monday afternoon when a small homemade aircraft crashed in a field and caught on fire near Knox City, Missouri.

According to Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) Sgt. Brent J. Bernhardt, the plane piloted by Gene Underland was enroute from Spicer, Minnesota to Florida when it crashed for unknown reasons.

A MSHP trooper saw smoke coming from a field about one mile northwest of Knox City, Missouri shortly after 3:35 p.m. April 23, and discovered the single engine aircraft fully engulfed in flames in a field owned by Ronald Baker.

Underland and one of his passengers, Richard Woltjer of Pennock, Minnesota were found suffering from serious burns as they walked a short distance from the crash scene. They were flown by Air-Evac helicopter to Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois, and later transferred to the burn center in Springfield, Illinois's St. John's Hospital.

Kimberly A. Woltjer, Richard's Woltjer's wife, was pronounced dead at the scene by Knox County Coroner, Jeff Doss.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) were scheduled to examine the scene Tuesday to begin a full investigation into the cause of the crash, the sergeant said.

MSHP was assisted on scene by deputies with the Knox County Sheriff's Department, Edina Police officers, fire department personnel from Knox City and Edina, the Edina Rescue Squad, and the Knox County Ambulance Service.

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