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Tim Middagh / The Globe

Straight line winds snapped wooden power poles crossing Interstate I-90, just east of Worthington. The downed lines caused a multi-vehicle crash just before 6 p.m. Wednesday.

PACKIN' A PUNCH

Wednesday night storm results in fatal crash, numerous power outages

By Julie Buntjer
The Globe

One person died and four others were injured Wednesday evening after high winds toppled power lines over Interstate 90, just east of Minnesota 60. The multi-vehicle crash included one vehicle being rear-ended by a semi tractor-trailer before getting entangled in the power lines, and another vehicle also getting caught in the wires. All of the vehicles were eastbound in mile 46.

The crash was reported to law enforcement at 5:54 p.m. Wednesday — just 11 minutes after the Worthington Regional Airport clocked its highest wind gust of the evening at 63 miles per hour, according to Phil Schumacher, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service at Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Killed in the crash was Martha Lilian Llanos Rodriguez, 30, of Mexico City, Mexico. She was a backseat passenger in a 2021 Chevrolet hatchback

driven by Diego Alvaro Campos, 37, of Chile. According to the Minnesota State Patrol, Campos had stopped to avoid the downed power lines when his vehicle was struck by a 2019 Freightliner Cascadia driven by Jaskaran Singh, 26, of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Campos and passenger Aldo Alberto Viscarra-Avilez, 33, of Chile, sustained non-life threatening injuries, while passenger Bradford Scott Barrett, 42, of Annapolis, Maryland, had life-threatening injuries. All three of the individuals were transported to Sanford Worthington Medical Center. Campos and Rodriguez were wearing seatbelts; Barrett was not, and Viscarra-Avilez's seatbelt status is unknown. Airbags in the vehicle did deploy.

Tyler Scott Gilbery, 23, of Tea, South Dakota, was the driver of a 2009 Pontiac G6 that collided with the power lines. He sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Sanford Worthington Medical Center. It was unknown if he was wearing a seatbelt.

Singh, the semi driver, was not injured. Assisting the Minnesota State Patrol

at the scene were the Nobles County Sheriff's Office, Worthington Police Department, Worthington Fire Department and Sanford Worthington Ambulance.

Interstate temporarily closed

With the downed power lines covering both east- and westbound lanes of Interstate 90, law enforcement personnel closed both lanes of travel for two and a half hours, according to Worthington Fire Chief Pat Shorter.

Shorter was among a crew of 15 from the department who responded to the scene. They stayed back until it was confirmed the power lines were properly de-energized by crews from Nobles Cooperative Electric. The power poles are owned by Great River Energy.

Both Campos and Viscarra-Avilez were outside of their vehicle and walking, albeit injured, when first responders arrived. After assessing the individuals in the Chevy, Shorter said they extricated Barrett, who was the front-seat passenger and the most critical. Barrett was the first to be transported to the hospital, followed by Campos

and Viscarra-Avilez. Gilbery was the last of the injured to be taken to the hospital.

Lori Buffington, spokesperson for Great River Energy, said their crews were immediately dispatched to the scene to clear the power lines from the interstate highway.

"The storm damaged 28 poles on our transmission lines in the area," Buffington said Thursday. "Our crews are now at work cleaning up the downed lines and have begun restoration. We expect the repairs to be completed within the next couple of weeks."

"Great River Energy expresses our sympathy for the loss of life and injuries that occurred as a result of the accident on I-90," she added.

Power disruptions

In addition to the high wind gusts, Schumacher said 1.33 inches of rain was recorded by the Worthington water treatment plant. But it was the wind that caused the most trouble.

Residents on the east half of Worthington were without power for approximately 20 minutes Wednesday evening when the downed power lines

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USFWS gets restored trail, new floating dock

By Julie Buntjer
The Globe

WORTHINGTON — A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-owned Waterfowl Production Area and Wetland Learning Area received some much-needed attention this week, as a work crew from Ohio was in town to demolish the wooden duck blind and existing dock in favor of a new floating dock with a fishing pier.

The property, located along Read Avenue, is one of USFWS' few parcels located so close to a city and provides the public with an opportunity to connect with nature. In addition to a wetland that offers opportunities for fishing (primarily carp) and waterfowl watching, the site features a walking trail through reseeded native prairie grasses and flowers.

Jonathan Beyer, Proj-

ect Leader with the Win- dom Wetland Management District, said the USFWS partnered with the Okabena-Oche- da Watershed District and the Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District to fund the new dock. The OOWD and SWCD each contributed \$3,500 toward the cost.

"This project is part of the Great American Outdoors Act," Beyer explained, noting that the Act was signed into law by the Trump Administration in August 2020 to prioritize investments in public access and recreation and help the USFWS fund some of its deferred maintenance projects.

Both the duck blind and dock — as well as the trail system at the Wetland Learning Area — qualified because it's

DOCK: Page 4



Tim Middagh / The Globe

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service employees strategize the assembly of a floating dock at the Worthington Wetland Learning Area and Waterfowl Production Area Tuesday afternoon.

Suspect at large after Worthington traffic stop

By Emma McNamee
The Globe

WORTHINGTON — Police were involved in a traffic stop where 2 individuals fled on foot near Clary Street and McMillan Street on Tuesday, May 10 at approximately 12:31.

Two men fled officers in a white U-Haul truck according to a press release from Worthington Police Department. Officers terminated their pursuit of the vehicle shortly after, due to concerns about public safety.

The U-Haul truck was later located unoccupied near Worthington Senior High School. The WPD recommend-

ed the school be placed into lockdown, though students were later released at the completion of the school day without incident.

Officers searched the area and took one male into custody. One individual is still at large and is described as a white male wearing a white t-shirt, light-colored baseball hat, and tattoos on his left arm.

If anyone has any information regarding this individual, contact the Law Enforcement Center at 507-295-5400.

Local law enforcement stated this was still an open case and no new updates were available as of yet.

Dust storm rolls across region Thursday

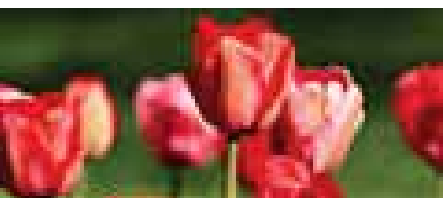


Photos by Tim Middagh / The Globe

Left: Wall of dust moves across southwestern Minnesota Thursday evening as a severe thunderstorm moves across Buffalo ridge, as seen from County Road 12 west of Worthington looking south Thursday evening. **Right:** Another view of the wall of dust moving across southwest Minnesota Thursday evening. A severe thunderstorm follows, moving across the Buffalo Ridge. This photo was taken from Nobles County 9, west of Worthington Thursday evening.


WEATHER

MOSTLY SUNNY **HIGH 73°**
LOW 50°



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STORM

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disrupted transmission to the city's No. 2 substation, according to Pat Demuth, Worthington Public Utilities electric superintendent. Included in the outage was the JBS pork processing plant, where second shift employees were in the dark until power was restored.

Demuth said the WPU obtained permission to switch the power supply fairly quickly. Buffington, meanwhile, said Great River Energy was able to get power restored to all substations it serves by approximately 1:30 a.m. Thursday.

Both Nobles Cooperative Electric and Federated Rural Electric also had customers



Tim Middagh / The Globe

Straight line winds snapped power poles along Interstate I-90, just east of Worthington Wednesday evening, leading to a multi-car crash and one fatality.

without power for a while Wednesday evening.

Tracey Haberman, member services manager at Nobles Cooperative Electric, reported six downed power poles in Seward Township, one in Graham Lakes Township, and 22 Great River Energy power poles down in the NCE service territory.

The downed power lines resulted in a disruption of electrical service to approximately

1,300 of NCE's members.

"It began shortly after 5 p.m., and the majority were all back on by 10 p.m.," Haberman said Thursday morning. "We still have a few accounts by I-90 that are not back on, and we're working on how to get them back up and running."

NCE linemen were out on Thursday to frame and set new power poles where the seven had come down.

Federated Rural Electric reported

Thursday morning that 1,133 of its members in southern Jackson County lost power at approximately 6:30 p.m. Wednesday. Most lost power due to the transmission line outage owned by Great River Energy.

Crews were able to restore power to the Miloma and West Lakefield substations at 6:40 p.m., with the Round Lake substation restored at 7:44 p.m., and members served by the Minneota substation

had their power restored at 7:47 p.m.

"Federated lost 10 three-phase overhead poles in this storm — all in the same area," stated George Madden, Federated's operations manager. "The downed poles were all along 460th Avenue, just north of Jackson County 4; the adjacent farm

place also had bin and machine shed damage spread out in a path in that field. Crews made temporary repairs last night with all power restored around 11:30 p.m."

Madden said crews were out Thursday to replace the poles snapped off by the strong winds.



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LOCAL BRIEFS

Blood donations needed ahead of summer

MINNEAPOLIS — When schools let out for summer and families set off on vacation, the American Red Cross typically sees a decline in donors, which can impact patient care.

It's critically important that donors make an appointment to give now before heading out for summer activities to help maintain a stable blood supply in the coming months.

Volunteer donors are the only source of blood for patients with blood disorders, trauma victims and those experiencing difficult childbirths.

Upcoming donation events include:

► May 16: 1 to 6 p.m. at the American Legion in Brewster; noon to 6 p.m. at the Lakes Area Senior Center, Spirit Lake, Iowa; and noon to 6 p.m. at the Community Center in Westbrook.

► May 18: 1 to 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Fulda; and 1 to 6 p.m. at First Christian Reformed Church in Sheldon, Iowa.

► May 19: 1 to 6 p.m.

at the Community Center in Milford, Iowa.

► May 23: 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Lake Sarah Baptist Church, Slayton.

► May 24: 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center in Windom.

To schedule an appointment to donate blood, platelets or plasma, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Waubun man killed in single-car crash

WAUBUN, Minn. — A 68-year-old man has died after his vehicle veered off the road and came to rest in a nearby pond.

According to a report from the Minnesota State Patrol, the man, whose name has not yet been released, was a resident of Waubun, and was traveling east on State Highway 113 at about noon on Thursday, May 12, when his Jeep Grand Cherokee left the road in Lake Grove Township. The vehicle hit a guardrail and rolled into a ditch on the south side of the road, then into a pond.

The report said the

man was not using a seat belt at the time of the crash, but his airbag was deployed.

Man dies after grain bin blown on him by storms

LAKE LILLIAN, Minn. — A man was killed when Thursday's storms blew a large grain bin on him.

The Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office reported that Ryan Leaf Erickson, 63, was found under a collapsed grain bin near Lake Lillian at approximately 6:59 p.m. Thursday. Erickson was a volunteer firefighter with the city of Blomkest.

The fatality was first reported Thursday night by the National Weather Service.

The Sheriff's Office and other emergency personnel responded to the scene northeast of Blomkest after receiving a report of a missing adult male in the area where a large grain bin had just been blown over by the storms.

Motorcyclist dies in west-central Minnesota crash

BENSON — A Benson man died when he lost

control of his motorcycle on Minnesota Highway 29 south of Benson around 8:19 p.m. Thursday.

Michael Allen Fifield, 49, was identified by the Minnesota State Patrol as the victim.

He was driving a 1997 Kawasaki motorcycle northbound on Highway 29 at 60th Street Southeast in Cashel Township of Swift County when he lost control and entered the ditch, according to the Minnesota State Patrol.

Alcohol was not a factor, and he was not wearing a helmet, according to the report.

The crash remains under investigation. The accident report lists the weather conditions at the time of the accident as severe wind and rain.

— Forum News Service

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