



TOWARD ZERO DEATHS
Because your life counts

Interstate 90 Bus Crash

November 18, 2009



Location Conditions

- Roadway – primarily east/west, straight and flat
- Speed limit – 70 m.p.h.
- Weather – overcast, 48 degrees, no precipitation
- Road surface – dry
- Wind – easterly, 4 m.p.h.
- Visibility – approximately 10 miles

Occupants/Destination

- Including the driver, 23 occupants
- Passengers picked up at various locations
- Northwood, Iowa



Trip Details

- 1989 MCI bus, owned by Bold Lines Inc. (Strain Tours)
- Bus Driver: Edwin W. Erickson, age 52
- Many passengers took this trip before
- Erickson recognized as driver from previous trips
- Diamond Joes: 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Aerial View of I-90



Occupant Seating Diagram

Occupant Placement									
Edwin Wayne Erickson									
Russell Denzer	Pam Holmquist					Helen Eubank	Janice Murphy		
	Prem Deep						Adele Larson		
Ardell Swenson						Richard Cooper	Beverly Cooper		
						Leon Markham	Virginia Markham		
Rhonda Hill						Maurice Greene	Alice Greene		
Betty Frigge	David Frigge					James Wilde	Helen Wilde		
						Earl Kesler	Mary Kesler		
						Betty Holmquist	Joyce Sievert		
						BATHROOM			

Return Trip

- Bus traveling eastbound on Interstate 90
- Cruise control was on at time of crash
- Witness account said bus did not appear to be speeding

Prior to Crash

Passenger Janice Murphy

- Seated in front row, right side window seat
- Described seeing bus veering from the right lane into the left lane towards median shoulder
- Erickson's head rested against the seat as if asleep
- "I hollered at him. It didn't rouse him or anything."

Crash Analysis

- Witness stated she thought it might have been a medical situation
- Bus continued through the median and crossed the westbound lanes of traffic
- Narrowly missed a westbound semi tractor-trailer that crossed the bus' path just to the west



9-1-1 Activation

- 9-1-1 calls went to both the Mower and Freeborn County Dispatch Centers at approximately 3:05 p.m.
- Several callers were from westbound vehicles that had narrowly avoided the bus
- Initial 9-1-1 call went into Freeborn County and placed the crash between Austin and Hayward



First Responders

- Bus passed off-duty Olmsted County Detention Deputy Frank Ensor prior to going into the median
- Mower County Chief Deputy Mark May was driving westbound doing a prisoner transport and came upon the crash

First Responders

- Mower County Deputy Pike responded to the scene from Austin
- Six Mower County Deputies responded
- Five Freeborn County Deputies responded (Earl, Malepsy, Golbuff, Beers and Strom)

Four E's Working Together



EMS Response and Issues

In total, 23 people involved:

- 1 flown to Rochester via Mayo 1
- 13 went to Austin Medical Center
- 7 went to Albert Lea Medical Center
- 2 were deceased

EMS Response and Issues

- Allocating resources
- Locating family members
- Body identification



Responding Agencies

- Albert Lea Medical Center Ambulance
- Albert Lea Fire Department
- Albert Lea Township Fire Department
- Austin Fire Department
- Clarks Grove Fire Department
- Glenville Fire Department
- Gold Cross Ambulance
- Hayward Fire Department
- Mower County Sheriff's Office
- Myrtle Fire Department

Responding Agencies Continued

- Freeborn Fire/Ambulance
- Blooming Prairie Ambulance
- Adams Ambulance
- Life Link Helicopter
- Mayo One Helicopter
- Mn/DOT
- Albert Lea School Bus Company
- Midtown Towing
- Andy's Tow & Travel
- Minnesota Regional Medical Examiner's Office



Minnesota State Patrol Staffing

- District 2100 conducted training on day of crash
- Half of district troopers trained in morning, remaining in afternoon
- Many troopers who trained in the morning session were still on duty when crash occurred
- Troopers in the afternoon session were just finishing

MSP Response continued

- Fourteen Troopers were called to respond
- Capt. Silkey and Lt. Westrum also responded
- Two Metro Troopers responded
(both crash reconstructionists)
- Capt. Matt Langer and Andy Skoogman, DPS
Director of Communications, were flown to the
scene via helicopter

Bus after being up-righted



Passenger side



Recovery and Towing





Crash Investigation File Review By Freeborn County Attorney

- Complete investigation file was delivered to Freeborn County Attorney Craig Nelson on December 15, 2009
- County attorney received an overview of the investigation
- On December 18, 2009, MSP was notified that no prosecution was warranted

Final Chapter



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

Government Center
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1 - (507) 377-5190
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Craig S. Nelson
County Attorney

Eden M. O'Brien


Dear Sgt. Boley:

Having had time to read the investigation file #09103125 and being advised that the forensic map, additional photos and narrative report of Sgt. Lance Langford will be consistent with this report, I am comfortable returning the file to you on this date with the determination that prosecution is not warranted.

Thank you for the thorough investigation.

This is a very tragic incident and the consequences will have a lasting impact on many people.

Sincerely,


Craig S. Nelson
Freeborn County Attorney

On-Scene Briefing

- It was dark and loud
 - Moved briefing into a fire rig
- Difficult to know what was going on
 - How many on the bus?
 - Where did they go?
 - What about witnesses?
- Media pressure

On-Scene Media Briefings

- Provided two on-scene briefings
 - Media relationships are invaluable – trust
 - Written statement due to the nature of the crash
 - Prepared for tough questions
 - Mobilized CMV data before it was requested
(info ready at 8:08 p.m. on crash night)

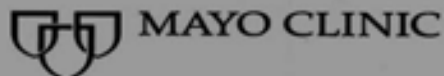
On-Scene Media Briefings

- Made initial determination of public/private data
- Were not aware of St. Mary's briefing
- Made sure everyone had what they needed

News Conference

- November 19, 2009, at 11 a.m. in St. Paul
 - Not preferred location?
- Coordinated with St. Mary's public relations staff all morning.
- Prepared for tough questions in a rapid fire environment.
- Incredible turn out.

St. Mary's Release



The definitions of these terms are below:

- **Critical:** Questionable prognosis. Vital signs are unstable or not within normal limits. There are major complications; death may be imminent.
- **Serious:** Acutely ill with questionable prognosis. Vital signs may be unstable or not within normal limits. A chance for improved prognosis.
- **Fair:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious. He or she is uncomfortable or may have minor complications. Favorable prognosis.
- **Good:** Vital signs are stable and within normal limits. Patient is conscious and comfortable. The prognosis is good or excellent.

Patients at Austin Medical Center – Mayo Health System

Media Contact Information:

Amy Bawek

507-434-1304

Name	Location	Condition
Adele Larson	Austin	Fair
Helen Wilde	Austin	Fair
James Wilde	Austin	Fair

Media – Lessons Learned

- Get basic information on State Patrol Media page ASAP
- Media information goes viral (National)
- Bring cell phone chargers and batteries

Media – Lessons Learned

- Designate different people to specific tasks
- Identify hierarchy of how many people involved and how far up the line
- Give proactive updates in timely fashion
- Define terminology that will be used (hospital vs. DPS)

Lessons Learned

- Need for a debrief soon after the incident
- Explore alternative options for Mass Communications, i.e. Twitter account
- Need to communicate better with other agencies having media involvement (hospitals, DOT, allied agencies)

Contact Information

Captain Matt Langer

Matthew.Langer@state.mn.us

612-919-8178 (cell)

Lieutenant Eric Roeske

Eric.Roeske@state.mn.us

651-492-9175 (cell)



Mn/DOT Response

- 3:20 p.m. – call to Albert Lea Truck Station
- 3:40 p.m. – called Austin Truck Station to assist
- Priority was to get traffic off of Interstate 90
- Motorists directed to County Road 46
- 8:30-9 p.m. – detour lifted

Mn/DOT Response

- What went well?
 - Westbound traffic through Austin was already slowed down due to construction project
 - Timely response from Mn/DOT truck stations to control traffic

Possible Improvements

- Staffing detour route differently?
- Post emergency detour route with up signs?
- Establish regional protocol
 - Who is responsible for contacting whom?

Audience Questions/Feedback