

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods/>

## USA, MD, CANTON

**MAY 7 2006.**

### **NITRIC ACID SPILL INJURES 2 WORKERS**

Two workers transporting a container of nitric acid from a rail car in Canton yesterday afternoon were injured when the container leaked, a Baltimore Fire Department spokesman said.

The pressurized container leaked as much as 150 gallons of the substance as workers attempted to transport it to a vehicle in the 4200 block of Boston St. about 3 p.m., said Fire Chief Kevin Cartwright, a department spokesman.

Cartwright said the names of the workers and their company were not available. They were taken to Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center for treatment of injuries and burns.

Firefighters and state environmental officials contained the spill in about 90 minutes, Cartwright said. He said that the incident did not pose an environmental hazard and that no evacuations were ordered because the spill was in an isolated area.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-md.me.leak07may07,0,119585.story?coll=bal-local-headlines>

## USA, TX, BAYTOWN

**MAY 7 2006.**

### **COUNTY FINDS VIOLATIONS IN EXXON SPILL**

*Michael Pineda*

A Harris County investigation of the process gas oil spill at the Exxon Mobil Baytown Refinery found two violations of state environmental regulations, but investigators have not yet decided what actions may be taken.

Shortly after midnight Jan. 23, a tank containing process gas oil overheated, causing a spill of 1,393 gallons of the substance, according to a report of the inspection by investigators with the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services' Pollution Control Division.

An estimated 35 pounds of the substance, a mixture of heavy lubricant oil and waxy material used in the refinery's catalytic cracker units to produce light hydrocarbons, was released through a hatch as an oily mist that drifted across Airhart Drive and covered the nearby Archia Courts public housing neighborhood.

Archia Courts residents, some of whom reported seeing the mist as it enveloped their neighborhood, woke the next morning to find a greasy film covering their homes and automobiles.

Exxon Mobil's investigation of the event found that three days earlier, a level gauge on the tank failed. While the bad gauge was reported to a night shift operator, it still had not been repaired by the time of the spill because no technicians trained in its repair were available to respond, according to the investigation documents obtained through an open records request by The Baytown Sun.

Because the bad level gauge had been reported, operators of the tank used a procedure for operating a tank with a problem gauge using a calculation to determine whether the tank was filling up with or drafting (or draining) the product, according to the documents. But the operators were unaware of an additional flow of the product into the tank, and believed that the tank was drafting, when in fact it was filling up with product.

"Exxon could not provide an explanation" why the operators were unaware of the additional flow into the tank.

The spill was discovered by a process technician who saw vapors or steam and oil spilling from the hatch on the top of the tank while making his rounds. Workers that night conducted perimeter monitoring and did not detect oil or odors offsite of the refinery's property, and believed that all the spilled process gas oil had been contained by a moat-like earthen containment surrounding the tank.

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After the spill was discovered, it took 10 minutes for operators to stop it by adjusting the flows to and from the tank, according to the documents.

A backup gauge was available for the failed one, but console operators were not aware of its existence, and an independent secondary high-level on the alarm did not sound when the tank overspilled.

The Harris County investigators noted they were made aware of the spill on Wednesday, Jan. 25, through a newspaper report of the spill and the company's subsequent cleanup efforts at Archia Courts on Tuesday. The company became aware of the impact on the neighborhood on Monday afternoon.

In the inspection documents, however, items under requirements for reporting emissions events within 24 hours after the discover of an event are marked as "non-applicable."

The report did find violations of the Texas Administrative Code and the Texas Health and Safety Code involving air contamination regulations under the Texas Clean Air Act.

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services spokeswoman Rita Obey said the office's enforcement division is reviewing the report to determine if any actions, such as civil litigation against the company, will be taken. A decision might be made within a few weeks to a couple of months, Obey said. "We're in the process of reviewing the report very carefully to determine what the best and appropriate course of action is," she said.

Patty Errico, a spokeswoman for Exxon Mobil's Baytown operations, said the company has received a letter from the county laying out the findings of the investigation and listing several "action items" to implement.

The company is implementing the corrective actions, she said.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is conducting its own investigation of the incident, including whether the company notified authorities in a timely manner. TCEQ spokesman Terry Clawson said the investigation should be completed in a week or so.

Last month, Exxon Mobil officials renewed their efforts to purchase the Archia Courts property from the Baytown Housing Authority. The company has sought to buy the property as part of its "greenbelt program" since 2001, but the effort stalled last year.

<http://web.baytownsun.com/story.lasso?ewcd=4e025cbd2803d1c1>

## UK, LONDON

**MAY 11 2006.**

### **GAUGE BLAMED FOR UK TANK BLAZE**

A broken safety gauge was the cause of Europe's biggest peacetime fire, according to an inspectors' report.

For more than two hours, the gauge recorded no change in the volume of fuel in one of Buncefield terminal's storage tanks, while unleaded petrol was being pumped in at a rate of 550 cu m an hour. Eventually it filled the tank, and 300 tonnes of it spilled out to form a lethal vapour cloud which resulted in a series of explosions on December 11, injuring 43 people and forcing the evacuation of thousands more.

Toxic chemicals used to put out the Buncefield fire have polluted the water below ground, prompting the water inspectorate to alter the definition of what constitutes safe drinking water. The inspectorate has accepted scientific advice that water is safe to drink if it contains no more than three micrograms per litre of a toxic substance known as PFOS, which was previously considered to be so dangerous that the Government was preparing legislation to make it illegal to import it.

Since the fire, inspectors have taken almost 400 water samples from rivers, boreholes and lagoons that have turned up traces of PFOS, but at a safe level.

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c\\_id=2&ObjectID=10381195](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c_id=2&ObjectID=10381195)

## USA, MD, BALTIMORE

**MAY 12 2006.**

### **EXXON TO FACE MORE LAWSUITS OVER GAS LEAK - JACKSONVILLE-AREA FAMILIES TO FILE CLAIMS SEEKING A TOTAL OF \$1 BILLION IN DAMAGES**

*Timothy B Wheeler*

Exxon Mobil Corp. is facing more lawsuits over the 25,000-gallon gasoline leak this year from one of its service stations that fouled ground water in the Jacksonville area of Baltimore County.

With at least two suits over the leak already lodged against the oil company, an additional 50 claims from Jacksonville-area families seeking a collective \$1 billion in punitive damages are to be filed today, said Stephen L. Snyder, their attorney.

The lawsuits accuse Exxon Mobil of negligence for allowing the gas to leak from an underground fuel line at the station. The suits also accuse the company and the station operator, Storto Enterprises Inc., of knowingly failing to report the leak for 37 days and of exaggerating the success of cleanup effort.

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Six residential and commercial wells have been contaminated enough by gasoline or its components to exceed state drinking-water guidelines, but officials say 62 residential wells show traces of methyl tertiary butyl ether, or MTBE, a gasoline additive.

"This is a major disruption in a lot of good families' lives," Snyder said. Families are worried about their drinking water, he said, as well as potential exposure to gas vapor, the effect on property values and disruption caused by the cleanup.

Also, according to the suits, Exxon had been found liable for a 1981 gas leak in the neighborhood - one in which the company was ordered after a trial to pay nearly \$2 million in punitive damages.

"Obviously, the punishment didn't work," Snyder said. And, the lawyer added, Exxon, which reported a record \$8.4 billion profit in the first quarter of this year, can afford to pay.

Betsy Eaton, spokeswoman for Exxon Mobil, said she had not seen the yet-to-be-filed lawsuits and could not comment.

A high-profile trial lawyer who promotes his record of winning four judgments or settlements worth more than \$100 million each, Snyder launched a newspaper and Internet advertising campaign last year seeking \$1 billion cases.

His move comes on the heels of two lawsuits filed against Exxon Mobil and Storto. The law firm of Peter G. Angelos filed a class action suit in March on behalf of residents seeking \$535 million in punitive damages and other relief. The Maryland Department of the Environment went to court last month seeking nearly \$12 million in penalties from the two businesses for alleged violations of state laws and regulations in what officials have called a "catastrophic" leak.

Snyder said his clients' lawsuits were "completely different" from the case brought by Angelos' law firm.

G. Macy Nelson, another plaintiff's lawyer who is not representing Jacksonville residents, said he sympathized with their plight. But he expressed doubts about their ability to win significant punitive damages because of a 1992 Court of Appeals ruling that drastically narrowed the grounds for such penalties.

Steven Tizard, 44, who said he helped organize the group of residents who hired Snyder, defended their quest for punitive damages.

"We have a 10-year-old, a 12-year-old, two dogs, a bird," he said.

Although Tizard's well on Robcaste Road has not shown contaminants, monitoring wells on his property have gas in them.

"We can't drink the water in good conscience. ... The aggravation, the nuisance, the peace of mind I've lost, the property values - I think a billion dollars is not enough, quite frankly."

[http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/baltimore\\_county/bal-md.co.exxon11may11.0.2927649.story?coll=bal-local-headlinesUSA](http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/baltimore_county/bal-md.co.exxon11may11.0.2927649.story?coll=bal-local-headlinesUSA)

### USA, FLA, WELLINGTON

**MAY 12 2006.**

### **WORKER DIES, ANOTHER SEVERELY BURNED AFTER FUMES IGNITE FIRE IN WELLINGTON HOME**

*Chrystian Tejedor*

A blackened window frame was the only visible sign of a house fire that killed a man Wednesday and severely burned another when lacquer fumes ignited in a bedroom where they were working.

"The homeowners were there in another room and they heard like a `whoosh,'" Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue Capt. Don DeLucia said outside the yellow house at 13281 152nd Place South in Wellington. "It ignited twice."

Tim Grant, 34, of Boynton Beach, died in the bedroom, authorities said.

Anthony Andrews, 41, of Dania Beach, suffered severe burns and jumped out a window to escape the flames. He was taken to the burn unit of Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. His condition was not available.

Investigators think the fire started accidentally about 3:15 p.m. while the men worked in a bedroom of Greg and Lisa Linehan's 3,465-square-foot home, DeLucia said.

The Linehans, who were not hurt, previously hired Grant and Andrews to install a dark-colored finish on the Mexican tile in their home that was similar to a finish they saw at a restaurant and liked, sheriff's spokesman Paul Miller said.

They changed their minds and then asked Grant and Andrews to remove the finish.

On Wednesday, Grant and Andrews were working on a bedroom on the east side of the house, overlooking a hedge that separates the \$1.5 million property from neighbors.

They poured a lacquer thinner on the tile then used an electric buffer to remove the finish.

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It was not clear how much time the men spent in the bedroom, but it seems that the lacquer fumes accumulated and ignited in two flashes, DeLucia said.

The Linehans called 911. Fire-Rescue crews arrived six minutes later but there was no blaze to extinguish because the fire quickly consumed the fumes in the bedroom, DeLucia said.

Firefighters treated Andrews where he fell on the grass in front of a 1,920-square-foot barn on the property, before he was taken to the hospital.

Officials said the Linehans, who could not be reached by phone, were taken aback after learning that Grant died and Andrews was hurt.

Andrews' father has known the family for years and has worked on their house, Miller said. "They were shaken, they were upset," Miller said. "It's not like they were strangers."

While these types of fires don't happen regularly, it's not unheard of.

"Lacquer thinner is very volatile. A spark will set it off," DeLucia said. "You need a very well-ventilated room."

[http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/southflorida/sfl-pwellfire11may11\\_0,5419199.story?coll=sfla-homeheadlines](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/local/southflorida/sfl-pwellfire11may11_0,5419199.story?coll=sfla-homeheadlines)

### CUBA, HAVANA

MAY 12 2006.

### SUGAR MILL POSES EXPLOSIVE RISK

*Patricia Grogg*

One of the main industrial sugar refining complexes in the province of Matanzas, in the west of Cuba, has been blamed for an underground build-up of methane gas and other violations of environmental law that are putting thousands of families in the area at risk.

The case came to light after it was reported in an extensive article in the daily newspaper *Juventud Rebelde* - the press in Cuba is a government monopoly - which included the testimonies of many residents and experts, who confirm the threat posed by the pollution caused by the Jesús Rabí agroindustrial complex in Calimete, a municipality in Matanzas with a population of 30,000.

According to the experts, the company's refinery and distillery both discharge their untreated waste into the same ditch, contaminating the groundwater. "This is improper waste disposal, and the main problem is the distillery," a source in the Sugar Ministry told IPS.

When they leak down into the subsoil, the waste products create underground pockets of methane, a colourless gas that is inflammable when mixed with air. The methane is produced by anaerobic digestion (in the absence of oxygen) by methanogenic bacteria that break down vegetable material.

"At the start of the rainy season when the groundwater level rises, the water reaches the gas pockets and compresses the methane, which is forced up to the surface," chemical engineer Manuel Pereira told the newspaper.

And Jorge Luis Bregio, a government official in Calimete who used to work for the Jesús Rabí company, said that when the weather was cold, methane gas accumulated inside the roof spaces of houses, "as if it were in a fume hood." The gas came up between the floor tiles, through chinks in walls and floors, or into courtyards through tiny cracks in the ground, he said.

"I knew of a person who went into a cave, and was almost asphyxiated by the presence of methane gas before he was brought out," Alberto Pino, who lives 10 kilometres away from the Jesús Rabí complex, told IPS by telephone.

Other residents of Matanzas said on Tuesday that they had not yet obtained a copy of *Juventud Rebelde*, but that they were keen on reading the article.

The Sunday, May 7 edition of *Juventud Rebelde* reported the testimony of María del Carmen Herrera, who suffered serious burns on her arms, back and legs from a fire in her bathroom. During a blackout, she attempted to light her way with a cigarette lighter, and the gas caused an explosion.

In the past, some people used the gas emerging from pits in the ground to improvise open air cooking fires. "Nowadays it seems that the methane is going elsewhere, because of the ditch they dug at the complex, but we do not know who will be harmed in future. The Calimete area has a lot of caves," said Raimundo Rodríguez, another local resident.

"Methane is highly dangerous and can cause explosions. In fact, there have been explosions at other times and places," an expert in the field, who wished to remain anonymous, told IPS.

Oscar Santalla, an expert, told the newspaper that for the past several years, because of "technical shortcomings," the distillery waste has been very acidic, and when added to the sugar mill waste, it cannot be used for "fertigation", a technique combining fertilisation and irrigation which would boost sugarcane yields and curtail pollutants.

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In fertigation, liquid wastes from the refinery, distillery wastes and the must from cultivating torula yeast (*Candida utilis*) are applied directly to crops.

Esperanza Valdés, director of the National Centre for Environmental Management for the sugar industry and its derivatives, confirmed that the Jesús Rabí complex and seven other sugar agribusinesses have been given financing for fertigation projects, which make good use of their industrial waste.

The director-general of the complex, Tomás Zamora, whom IPS was unable to contact by telephone, told Juventud Rebelde that the refinery has already received some of the materials for setting up five irrigation systems that make use of Brazilian technology..

In his opinion, the problem is close to being solved, because the system will permit "recovery of the lakes, and treatment of the waste water." The distillery waste must be decanted from one tank to another, until it is suitable for use in fertigation.

But until such time as the proposed solutions take effect, municipal authorities are afraid that the drinking water for people in the area might become polluted, due to the impact of the untreated waste in the soil and groundwater. Some wells are already fit only for irrigation.

There are two wells in the area that provide drinking water for 4,700 people, more than 2,000 of whom - comprising 685 households - live in the Rabí "batey" (community living in the factory compound). In Matanzas province, 48 percent of the water is derived from the surface, and the rest is groundwater.

Research by the University of Havana Cuban Centre for Economic Studies (CEEC) found that the main pollution problem posed by the sugar industry is the discharge of liquid wastes by sugar mills, refineries, torula yeast factories and distilleries.

These industries are spread throughout most of the municipalities in this Caribbean island nation, and to a greater or lesser extent they have an impact on river basins, bays, coastal areas and inland waters, and also affect the soils around their waste ditches, when these are in poor condition.

However, Santiago Rodríguez Castellón, who has written a research report on this subject, said that the programme for restructuring the sugar industry, which began in 2002, could contribute to the improvement of environmental management and to "changing the socio-economic perspective" on ecological problems.

It is estimated that the 157 sugar mills existent in the mid-1970s used to discharge an average of 36 million cubic metres of liquid waste a year into their surroundings.

The restructuring of what was for decades the country's top industry has left only 71 active sugar mills, 14 honey producing businesses, 25 companies that combine agriculture and livestock, 13 distilleries and 11 torula yeast factories. Around 40 sugar mills took part in this year's harvest.

The Jesús Rabí complex, one of the three agribusinesses in Matanzas which contributed to this year's harvest, has been admonished on several occasions for environmental practices that contravened decree-law No. 200 of 1999. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=33198>

## **IRELAND, CO AMAGH,**

**MAY 12 2006.**

### **CUSTOMS RAID ILLEGAL FUEL PLANT**

Customs officers have seized 12,000 litres of contaminated diesel from a fuel laundering plant in County Armagh.

The agency estimated that the plant at Belleeks could have produced 150,000 litres of fuel a week, with a potential loss to the revenue of £3.5m a year.

More than four tonnes of toxic acid waste was removed, some found in an underground concrete slurry pit.

Pat Curtis from HM Revenue and Customs said there was evidence of leakage into the surrounding countryside.

"This is not just about organised criminality, with a few individuals lining their own pockets," he said on Thursday.

"For every 10,000 litres of fuel laundered a tonne of toxic waste is produced which is then indiscriminately dumped in our countryside."

The plant has been dismantled and a number of other items have been seized. No one has been arrested.

It was the second laundering plant to be discovered in Northern Ireland in the past 48 hours.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/4762241.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4762241.stm)

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, IN, EVANSVILLE

MAY 12 2006.

## RAIN HELPS CLEAR OIL SPILL

All this rain is helping out with cleanup of a crude oil spill in Gibson County. Conservation officers say about 90 barrels of oil leaked into a ditch from an oil tank battery. There was a leak in the containment wall of the ditch, and that allowed the oil to seep into a creek. Officials don't expect any damage to animal life or a fish kill. The rain helped dilute and flush the oil out of the creek.

<http://www.14wfi.com/Global/story.asp?S=4890581&nav=3w6o>

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, PORT OF SPAIN

MAY 15 2006.

## GAS TANK EXPLOSION VICTIM:

*Camille Clarke*

I am in terrible pain

One of the victims of last Thursday's explosion on Independence Square, Port-of-Spain, yesterday complained of terrible treatment at the Port-of-Spain General Hospital, and from the EHS services.

Speaking to Sunday Newsday from her hospital bed, Anisha Joseph, 19, said she had not been treated by a doctor for the day, up to 3.30 pm yesterday.

"I was told that I would not receive the Cat Scan results until next Wednesday. I am in pain and I cannot move," Joseph said.

Joseph is suffering from spinal injuries, and her neck is in a brace. Joseph also said she is suffering from severe high anxiety attacks.

Joseph said she was on her way to class at South East Senior Comprehensive School when the blast occurred. A gas tank belonging to a vendor exploded last Thursday afternoon, injuring Joseph, and nine other persons, including Michelle Lisa King who remains in critical condition. King suffered injuries to her legs.

"I made it all the way to Ross Drugs and I collapsed," Joseph said, "we called the EHS services twice and they assisted everyone else. A fireman came into Ross Drugs after a while and helped me."

Joseph said she is not interested in taking legal action against anyone, as it was just an accident. Also injured was nuts vendor, Maureen Bernard. She told Sunday Newsday that she was not transacting business at the time of the incident. Bernard is suffering burns to her face, shoulders, and her stomach.

"I was not expecting that to happen," Bernard whispered, in pain.

Police revealed that a makeshift gas tank that was used to roast nuts, developed a leak, causing the stove to burst into flames and an explosion occurred.

A makeshift gas tank was seized on Friday morning from the scene of the accident.

Nuts vendor Arnim Atwell, Lisa King, Anisha David and Crystal Persad sustained injuries to various parts of their bodies when the tank exploded. Several teenagers who were liming on the Promenade were wounded in the melee and one sustained injuries to his eye. The names of the other victims were not released. Officers revealed that they are still investigating the incident and are yet to determine if negligence was a factor in the accident which caused injury to innocent bystanders.

<http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0,37418.html>

INDIA, - KOTTAYAM, KOCHI

MAY 15 2006.

## 10,000 KILO LITRE OIL STORAGE TANK COLLAPSES, NO ONE INJURED

People ran out of their homes in panic as a 10,000 kilo litre capacity oil storage tank, being pressure tested with water, collapsed at Vathurthy near here early this morning.

As thousands of litres of water stored in the tank gushed out with loud noise, people in the nearby houses rushed out in panic, fearing an oil leakage.

However, no one was injured in the incident, which took place around 0100 hrs, police said.

The tank, belonging to B R Petrochem, was being pressure-tested ahead of its commissioning. Another tank belonging to the company had collapsed in June last year while being tested. One person was killed in that mishap.

Police said a utility building of B R Petrochem was washed away in today's mishap.

According to sources, the tank providentially collapsed on its southern side instead of the northern end, on which side several other storage tanks are located.

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The Wellington Island Action Council, which has been agitating against the building of huge storage tanks close to crowded residential areas, said 40 such tanks of four private companies had come up in the area in recent years.

Council convener T R Sanu alleged that the tanks were not being built scientifically and warned that a major mishap could take place some day.

The tanks are being used to store edible oil, crude oil and chemicals such as benzene and methanol.

[http://www.deepika.com/english/archives/ENG3\\_sub.asp?hcode=139447&ccode=ENG3&newsdate=05/15/2006](http://www.deepika.com/english/archives/ENG3_sub.asp?hcode=139447&ccode=ENG3&newsdate=05/15/2006)

## USA, NY, SCHUYLER CO, DIX

MAY 15 2006.

### WORKER KILLED IN GAS RIG COLLAPSE - THREE OTHERS INJURED IN SCHUYLER COUNTY ACCIDENT.

*G. Jeffrey Aaron*

A worker was killed early Friday and three others were injured when the natural gas drilling rig they were working on collapsed and fell onto a nearby trailer in the Schuyler County town of Dix.

The Schuyler County Sheriff's Department has identified the man killed as Burton Stebbins, 27, of Wellsville.

He was tethered to the rig about 30 feet above the ground when it collapsed and fell on him, Schuyler County Sheriff William Yessman told The Associated Press.

The injured men are identified as:

- John Matheny, 21, of Ohio, who was treated at Arnot Ogden Medical Center in Elmira and released.
- Richard Waters, 21, of Whitesville, N.Y., who is listed in good condition at Arnot Ogden Medical Center.
- Kenneth Schoonover, 41, of Renovo, Pa., who is listed in fair condition at Arnot Ogden Medical Center.

The drilling rig was on Baker Hill Road and owned by Union Drilling Inc., which has corporate offices in Fort Worth, Texas, and a regional office in Buckhannon, W.Va.

The company was drilling the well for EOG Resources, which is based in Houston.

The accident occurred at about 1:40 a.m. Friday and was called into the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department by a resident who lives near the scene, county Undersheriff Breck Spaulding said.

"The resident was awakened by the sound, and we dispatched fire, rescue and law enforcement personnel. We were initially concerned that there may have been a gas leak and were on stand-by until it was determined there was no leak," Spaulding said.

"OSHA is doing their investigation and will let us know if there was anything criminal. But at this point, it appears to be an accident," he said.

Early reports from the scene indicated the ground may have become soggy from heavy rains that moved through the area late Thursday, which could have led to the rig tipping over.

The region received just under an inch of rain between Thursday evening and Friday morning.

The Baker Hill Road rig was about 100 yards from the home of Barbara Groves and her son, Anthony.

Barbara Groves had signed a mineral rights lease for an acre near the drilling site, her son said, and the rig had been on-site for only a few weeks.

Anthony Groves was visiting a friend when he heard the call go out over the scanner and called his mother at home to find out what happened.

"I couldn't get a lot of detail from the scanner, but my mother said she was watching TV when she heard a loud bang, and she thought the rig blew up.

"Then she went to the porch and saw it had fallen over. It's kind of crazy, when you come over the top of the hill, the rig is the first thing you see. Now it's gone and it's like 'Oh, my God,' " he said.

Natural gas drilling is a recent phenomenon in the Southern Tier.

Several natural gas exploration companies flocked to the area to tap the Trenton-Black River underground formation after a successful well was tapped in 1999 on Mormon Hollow Road in the town of Corning.

Since then, more than 63 active natural gas wells have sprung up in Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben and Yates counties.

Fortuna Energy Inc., based in Big Flats, has become the dominant gas company in the region and had a minority interest in the drilling rig that collapsed, said Fortuna President Judy Harding.

Union Drilling Inc. is drilling two other wells near Monterey in Schuyler County for Fortuna Energy.

"Our experience with them has been positive," Harding said.

"They've been drilling for us for as long as we've been here. At this point, the investigation is still going on, and we are optimistic that once it is done, we will all be able to benefit from the lessons learned because nobody likes to see these incidents occur."

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Federal inspectors from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration were on the accident scene Friday to determine whether any safety violations occurred at the time the rig collapsed, a spokesperson for the agency's Syracuse regional office said.

Union Drilling Inc. has been inspected by OSHA 13 times since 2004, according to the federal agency's Web site, and has paid fines totaling \$59,476.

The violations include improperly installed safety escape devices, deficiencies with mechanical power apparatus and improper wiring methods or electrical components for general use.

On Friday morning, Union Drilling Inc. issued a statement that said it is cooperating with the accident investigation and expressed sympathy for the victims and their families.

"All of the members of the Union Drilling management team would like to express that we are deeply saddened by (Friday) morning's tragic event.

"Our first concern is making sure that those injured receive proper medical attention and that the impacted families receive our support. We have been in contact with the families and have expressed our thoughts, concern and prayers," the statement said.

<http://www.stargazettenews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060513/NEWS01/605130307>

### **CANADA, NEWFOUNDLAND, ST. JOHN'S MAY 16 2006.**

#### **INVESTIGATORS SHARPEN FOCUS ON FATAL TANK FIRE**

A fatal welding fire ignited in an area of a Newfoundland tanker that was not tested by a marine chemist for flammable fumes, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada has confirmed.

The flash fire aboard the MV Kometik on April 8 claimed the life of Wayne Dalton, a 38-year-old Cape Broyle resident. Another man was sent to hospital with severe burns

The Kometik, which services the Hibernia oil field, was moored at Conception Bay at the time of the fire.

The TSB said a marine chemist had been on board the Kometik before the incident. However, the chemist did not test the ship's tank No. 5 to make sure it was clear of flammable fumes before work began inside the tank.

"Right now, what we know is that the chemist that tested tank No. 4 didn't test tank No. 5," said Pierre Murray, one of five TSB investigators working on the case.

Murray says tank was tested a member of the ship's crew before the welding work began.

The TSB is now examining whether that crew member was qualified to perform that test.

"We have to go through all [the] regulations, all the standards, all the process and look at all that documentation, and come out and say 'Well, what is a competent person to do the job?' " Murray said. "And it's not clear."

Canship Uglund, the company that owns the Kometik, is not commenting while the TSB investigation is still underway.

Meanwhile, investigators are also checking the testing equipment to see if it is working properly.

<http://www.cbc.ca/nl/story/nf-tsb-kometik-20060515.html>

### **USA, ARK MAY 17 2006.**

#### **EXPLOSION AT ARKANSAS SOYBEAN PLANT KILLS ONE**

An explosion on Tuesday morning killed a worker who was repairing a soybean oil storage tank at a Riceland Foods Inc. plant in Stuttgart, Arkansas, the local fire department said. "We don't know at this time what caused the explosion," said Kie Sherman, captain of the Stuttgart Fire Department. "That's still being investigated." The worker's name was not being released, pending notification of his family. Riceland Foods, a farmer cooperative based in Stuttgart, is a major miller and exporter of U.S. rice and also a major soybean processor in the mid-South.

<http://today.reuters.com/News/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=N16449968>

### **USA, AR, STUTTGART, BLUFF MAY 18 2006.**

#### **ONE KILLED IN EXPLOSION**

*Ray King*

A maintenance worker at a Riceland Foods processing plant at Stuttgart was killed Tuesday morning after an explosion in a tank used to process soybean oil.

"Apparently the gentleman was working in the oil tank when pressure built up, causing the explosion and blowing him upward where he hit some pipes," said Stuttgart Police Chief Michael Smith on Tuesday afternoon. "When our officers arrived with the fire department and paramedics, the man was pronounced dead at the scene."

# Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Emergency workers at the scene used a crane to reach the victim and lower him to the ground.

Company spokesman Bill Reed said Tuesday the name of the victim, a maintenance worker in his 40s, was not being released until family member could be notified.

Reed said the man and another employee were doing routine maintenance on top of the Riceland Foods Soy Division storage building at Park Avenue and Spur Road when the explosion occurred at about 8:30 a.m. The other worker was not injured.

"We were on the scene for about an hour and you really couldn't see much from the ground," Smith said. "It wasn't a very big explosion apparently."

Fire Department Captain Kie Sherman said the cause of the blast is still under investigation.

"At this time we're not really sure what exploded," he said, adding that the building was not on fire when firefighters arrived.

Arkansas County Sheriff Allen Cheek said he couldn't hear the explosion from his office about a mile away and an employee at the Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce told a Commercial reporter early Tuesday afternoon they weren't aware of the incident.

"Normally our department doesn't investigate industrial accidents unless there's some indication of criminal activity," Smith said. "That's up to OSHA and the company."

Riceland Foods, the largest employer in Stuttgart, is a major soybean processor and rice exporter. A cooperative, the company also provides marketing services for rice products, soybeans and wheat.

<http://www.pbcommercial.com/articles/2006/05/17/news/news1.txt>

## **JAPAN, KAWASAKI**

**MAY 21 2006.**

### **FIRE FOLLOWING OIL TANK EXPLOSION NEAR TOKYO NOW UNDER CONTROL**

Firefighters battled flames and black smoke for more than two hours after an oil tank exploded near Tokyo Sunday, police said. No one was injured in the incident.

A tank measuring about 10 meters across burst into flames at a seaside factory operated by Toa Oil Co., just west of Tokyo, at about 3 p.m. (0900 GMT), according to police spokesman Hitoshi Matsumura.

The blaze was brought under control after about two hours, and fire officials were using a spraying agent to bring the temperature down inside the tank, according to another police official who identified himself only as Shibata.

The tank contained about 4,000 liters of an asphalt-related oil product. The force of the explosion blew the tank's lid off, Matsumura said.

There were no casualties and other tanks weren't damaged, he said.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the explosion, but foul play wasn't immediately suspected.

The temperature of the oil product is usually maintained at 160 degrees Celsius, and a rise in that temperature may have caused the explosion, Shibata said.

Toa Oil refines crude oil for Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K., a major distributor of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group, according to Toa's Web site.

Calls to Toa Oil and Showa Shell headquarters went unanswered Sunday, and the impact on their operations was not immediately clear.

<http://mdn.mainichi-msn.co.jp/national/news/20060521p2a00m0na001000c.html>

## **USA, MICH, MANISTEE COUNTY**

**MAY 26 2006.**

### **FUEL TANK EXPLOSION KILLS 1**

A man died when he was blown 700 feet through the air from the top of an exploding fuel tank, state police said. The explosion Wednesday in northeast Manistee County was heard 5 miles away and shook photos from walls of nearby homes, troopers said. Jessie Hernandez, 38, of Bear Lake, was using a power saw to cut fittings from the top of a fuel tanker when it exploded at 3 p.m., Sgt. John Hansen said. The top of the tank rocketed 200 feet into a woods. Hernandez was found more than 700 feet away. He was working for a salvage company to dismantle the tanks at an abandoned oil well, Hansen said. The explosion ignited a fire that took more than a half-hour to extinguish. The state is investigating with environmental and worker safety inspectors.

<http://www.mlive.com/news/grpress/index.ssf?/base/news-2/1148568524272480.xml&coll=6>