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Australia’s Dynamic
Pipeline Industry”*

15 May 2006 Safety Alert 6

APIA Safety Alert

Smyth County News
Wednesday, May 17, 2006

A worker for a company contracted to lay a gas pipeline across Smyth County for Duke Energy was killed in a work site accident Monday.

David Lee Burrow, 45, of Pharr, Texas, died after becoming trapped between a side crane dozer and his pickup truck, according to Smyth County Sheriff David Bradley. Burrow was an employee of Sunland Construction Inc., Craig Meier, Sunland vice president confirmed Tuesday.

According to Bradley, Sgt. Ronnie McKinnon and Deputy Alan Morgan responded to a 5:32 p.m. 911 call to the scene with members of Chilhowie Fire Department / Emergency Medical Services and found Burrow’s body in a field just west of Spring Branch Road near Seven Mile Ford. The responders were joined by Bradley, Chief Deputy Kenny Lewis, Investigator Johnny Joannou, Chilhowie police officers and Virginia State Police troopers.

Bradley said an investigation by his department “showed that Mr. Burrow, needing to speak with his co-workers, drove his pickup down into an area where they were located. Once in this area, his pickup became stuck. After failed attempts to get the vehicle free, Mr. Burrow exited his vehicle and walked to the top of the hill to get the help of a side crane dozer. Once he arrived behind his pickup truck he attempted to hook the wench from the dozer to his vehicle. ...the dozer started to roll as described by a coworker at the scene. A co-worker observing what was taking place attempted to yell at Mr. Burrow, but couldn’t get his attention. Mr. Burrow was unaware that the dozer was rolling into him and he became trapped between the dozer and his pickup truck.”

Meier, of Eunice, La., called the incident “very unusual for this company.” He said Sunland has “a full-time safety person on the job,” and that Sunland’s record “is better than the industry average for construction. We take safety very seriously. We take a lot of training.”

Gretchen Kreuger, external affairs manager for Duke Energy, said Tuesday her company was saddened by the accident. “Our contract employees are like one of our family,” she said.

Sunland’s specialty, Meier said, is working with pipelines. Kreuger said Sunland is in Smyth County replacing four miles of eight-inch pipe with 24-inch pipe in an existing Duke right of way.

Bradley said officials from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration were at the scene Tuesday and that results from the state medical examiner’s office are pending.

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