

Lake Granby Explosions, Fire Claim At Least One Victim

By Will Bublitz, Sky-Hi Daily News
May 8, 2008

At least one person died in Wednesday night's explosion and fire at a trailer park on the southwestern shore of Lake Granby.

A positive identification of the victim has not yet been made. The body was found Thursday afternoon near the remains of one of four housetrailer that were destroyed at the Table Mountain Trailer Court.

In a press release, Grand County Undersheriff Walt Eldridge reported the following: "The body of a victim who was killed in an explosion and fire at a mobile home was discovered at 1:28 p.m. today. According to Grand County Coroner Brenda Bock, the victim's body was blown 120 feet by the blast, landing behind an unoccupied residence and out of sight of firefighters and investigators."



Grand County Coroner Brenda Bock, left, Colorado Bureau of Investigation Fire Investigator Brett Ellis, center, and Deputy Coroner Cindy Eller search Thursday through the debris of Wednesday night's explosion and fire at the Table Mountain Trailer Park.
Byron Hetzler/Sky-Hi Daily News

The search through the charred remains of the four housetrailer began early Thursday morning by investigators from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, Grand County Sheriff's Office and the Grand County Coroner's Office.

"The cause of the blast that resulted in the destruction of the four mobile homes has not been determined," Eldridge stated.

The explosion and fire occurred at the Table Mountain Trailer Court just before 8 p.m. Wednesday. The Grand County Dispatch Center in Hot Sulphur Springs received an initial 9-1-1 call at 8:03 p.m.

According to Eldridge, the explosion and resulting fire began in one of the mobile homes. It then quickly spread to three nearby mobile homes, which were eventually destroyed in the blaze.

Firefighters from three Grand County fire departments responded to the scene and battled the fire. Also arriving to assist were units of the Grand County EMS and Sheriff's deputies.

Due to the intensity of the fire and possibility of more explosions, Sheriff's deputies stopped all traffic on U.S. Highway 34 in the vicinity of the blaze for about three hours.

Beyond the death of the one individual, no other casualties were reported in Wednesday night's incident.

The day after, residents in the immediate area of the fire are still speaking in awe of Wednesday night's initial explosion.

The trailer court's owner, Deb Treiber, who said she and her husband John were sitting in their house just before 8 p.m. Wednesday when suddenly there was "a big flash, a big boom and a big fire." Their house was fortunately shielded them from the blast by a housetrailer.

"There was still huge, horrendous explosion," she said. "Pictures were falling off the walls and lamps came off our ceiling. The explosion took place about 100 feet away, but there was a housetrailer in between us and the blast."

Treiber said that she believed she knows who the victim is because he was the "only year-round resident in the park," but declined to identify him before officials could confirm it. She said that it was fortunate the accident occurred before the arrival of the trailer court's summer residents, otherwise there might have been other victims.

The Table Mountain Trailer Court is located behind and down the hillside from the old Circle H restaurant/lounge. Its new owner Ken Hilton said he and his fiancée April Lang were just sitting down to dinner when the first explosion occurred.

"The blast jumped us right out of our seats, and we didn't start breathing again for 15 seconds," Hilton said. "We thought for sure it was our building, but then we saw through the window that the flames were on the other side of the trailer park."

Running outside, Hilton said Lang and he ran down to the shoreline of the lake. They were there when, about five minutes later, a second huge explosion rocked the trailer court, followed by a third smaller explosion about a minute later.

"After that second big explosion, I saw debris flying high into the sky," he said. "I had to dodge one three-foot-long piece of debris that almost hit me. The next explosion about a minute later was smaller, but still powerful. We could see that the window of our neighbor's house had been completely blown out and the fire was spreading rapidly."

Fortunately, local firefighters soon arrived on the scene.

"The fire departments did an awesome job," Hilton said. "They got the fire contained and prevented a lot of damage. Thank God, all those firefighters worked so well together."