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## Collision near Abilene kills railroad worker

Posted: August 29, 2011 - 5:30am

By **Sherman Smith**

THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

A Union Pacific Railroad employee from Wakarusa was killed in a collision Sunday afternoon after the cross arms didn't come down at an intersection just east of Abilene.

Mark Davis, a regional media director for Union Pacific, said the employee was westbound around 4 p.m. Sunday in a pickup fitted with wheels for the track when the truck collided with a southbound vehicle on Jeep Road.

The arms are supposed to come down when such trucks are used on the tracks, Davis said.

Elmer "Butch" Hulse, 59, of Wakarusa, died after being taken to Abilene Hospital, the Kansas Highway Patrol accident report said.

The report said he was driving a 2006 Chevrolet truck and wasn't wearing a seat belt.

KHP road trooper Marshall Hageman said "it was just an unfortunate accident" and no citations were issued based on the evidence. The investigation will focus on whether the cross arms were functioning, he said.

Davis said he didn't know why the arms didn't go down.

The accident report said Jean Aker, 52, was driving the 1995 Ford passenger car that struck Hulse. She also was taken to Abilene Hospital, but a KHP spokeswoman said her injuries weren't classified as being serious.

Aker was wearing a seat belt, the report said.

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