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Kentucky man killed in Lee County train derailment

By Wes Bunch

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ST. CHARLES — Virginia State Police are investigating a Kentucky man's death that was caused when a CSX train derailed late Sunday night in Lee County and landed on a vehicle parked next to it.

Authorities said Jamie Collins, 31, of Baxter, Ky., died from injuries he sustained when a railcar from the train overturned on a 2003 Ford Windstar van he was driving.

Collins was declared dead Monday morning at Lee Regional Medical Center in Jonesville.

A passenger in the van — Jason H. Williams, 33, of Viper, Ky. — was airlifted to Holston Valley Medical Center in Kingsport. Williams is reportedly being treated for serious injuries.

According to a VSP report, the derailment occurred at about 11:45 p.m. when a train car loaded with coal left the tracks at Turners Siding near the intersection of Route 635 and Route 636 in St. Charles.

When the train car derailed, part of it overturned on the van occupied by Collins and Williams. The van was reportedly parked in a gravel lot adjacent to the tracks.

The van is owned by J&K Transport and was used as a "transport taxi" to shuttle railroad employees back and forth from train destinations.

The VSP said it is continuing to investigate the death and injury that resulted from the derailment.

State Police did not comment on what led to the incident and directed questions on the matter to the train's owner, CSX Transportation.

CSX spokesman Bob Sullivan said six of the train's 53 cars came off the track during the derailment. All of the cars were loaded with coal, Sullivan said.

Sullivan said CSX and Norfolk Southern, the owner of the railroad track, were investigating what

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caused the incident alongside state authorities.

Although a cause is still being determined, local authorities who responded to the scene said the derailment occurred while the train was attempting to back up.

Sullivan said CSX's "thoughts and prayers are with those involved and their families."

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