

## 2 workers killed in Iowa freight train collision



APRIL 17, 2011 8:51 PM

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) --- A coal train rear-ended a train carrying maintenance equipment in western Iowa on Sunday, killing two crew members and shutting down the tracks.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway spokesman Gus Melonas said both trains were headed east when the accident happened about 7 a.m. in McPherson, about 45 miles southeast of Council Bluffs.

The coal train had been going from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming to Chicago with 130 loads of coal. The fuel was to be transferred to another line in Chicago to be sent to an Eastern utility, he said.

The other train was hauling 34 cars of maintenance equipment belonging to the railroad from Bridgeport, Neb., to Creston, Iowa, Melonas said. Both trains had two-person crews.

The conductor and engineer on the coal train were killed, Melonas said. The crew on the other train was not injured.

"This is an extremely tragic situation for everyone involved," he said.

He did not release the names of the people who were killed.

Initial reports indicate 10 cars on the maintenance train derailed as well as one of the three locomotives on the coal train, Melonas said. Some cars are on their sides, and maintenance equipment has been scattered. The crash also started a fire that affected the locomotives on both trains, he said.

The tracks used by about 40 freight trains a day have been shut down and trains are being rerouted, Melonas said. Emergency crews are at the crash site, and an investigation is ongoing.

Amtrak service has been affected by the track closure. Spokesman Cliff Cole said passengers on the California Zephyr route, which runs between San Francisco and Chicago, are being transported by bus around the affected track. The bus service is between Galesburg, Ill., and Omaha, Neb.