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Tuesday, June 2, 1998 Last modified at 1:08 a.m. on Tuesday, June 2, 1998

Santa Fe railroad employee crushed between cars, killed

By ELIZABETH LANGTON

Avalanche-Journal

A train accident at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railyard killed a 24-year-old railroad employee early Monday morning.

Jason Navarro of Lubbock died shortly after he was crushed between a locomotive engine and a grain hopper car about 12:40 a.m., according to police reports. He had worked at the railroad for 10 months.

Navarro, a switch foreman, was standing on the back of the engine and directing the engineer with a lantern. The engineer was slowly backing two connected engines when the rear of the engine grazed the grain car on an adjacent track.

"The edge of the engine hit the edge of the grain hopper car, catching Navarro between the two," police spokesman Bill Morgan said. "The engineer felt the concussion and stopped the train."

Though the train was moving slowly, the engine's massive weight, more than 60 tons, severed Navarro's body at the waist, according to reports.

The railroad company and the Federal Railroad Commission will conduct an investigation similar to how police examine fatal car accidents, Burlington Northern Santa Fe spokesman Jim Sabourin said.

Sabourin could remember no other fatal accidents involving employees at the Lubbock railyard, near the 800 block of Avenue E.

"They are rare, and we certainly don't like them to occur," he said.

A 38-year-old man was killed at the railyard in April 1997 after being struck by a switch engine. He was not a railroad employee.

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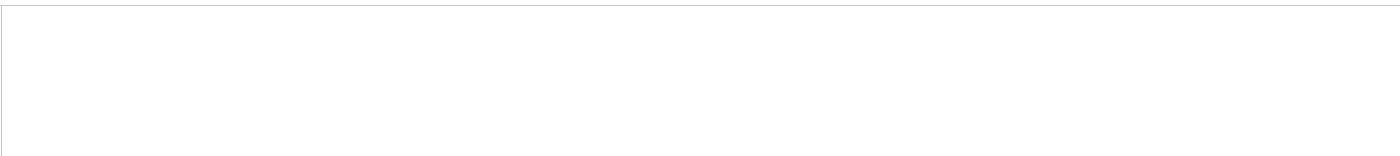
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