

Railroad worker who died after fall from Jacksonville trestle identified as Michigan operator

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By Dana Treen

A worker who fell from a Jacksonville train trestle below the Acosta Bridge Tuesday was a 42-year-old boom truck operator from Michigan, his employer said.

Peter Jerome Michnick was working for Osmose Railroad Services doing bridge repairs on the trestle bridge when he apparently fell and struck his head. Police released his name this morning.

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He was on the bed of a large boom truck used to lift bridge cross-members on the last day of the project, company President Harry Holekamp said. It is the second year the company has worked on the bridge.

Holekamp said none of the five other crew members working on the job saw their co-worker fall.

"They heard a thump," Holekamp said. Police said Michnick hit his head before falling into the St. Johns River and disappearing beneath the surface for about five minutes.

Michnick and two workers who followed him into the water to attempt a rescue were picked up by a boater and taken to a nearby dock. Michnick was pronounced dead at Shands Jacksonville.

"We're very distraught here," Holekamp said from the company offices in Wisconsin.

He said Michnick had been with the company for about a year and was a good employee. He was married and lived in Carney, Mich.

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