

## Freight trains collide near Roswell, one dead



This was the scene Tuesday morning in Chaves County at the site of head-on collision between two freight trains about 10 miles southeast of Roswell. One crew member, identified as Jesse T. Coburn III, 48, of Texico was pronounced deceased at the scene. The second crew member was transported to Lubbock for medical treatment and is listed in stable condition. (Courtesy of the Roswell Police Department)

By [ABQnews Staff](#)

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Two freight trains collided head-on just after 6 a.m. Tuesday about 10 miles southeast of Roswell, killing one person, injuring another and derailing locomotives and freight cars.

Crew member Jesse T. Coburn III, 48, of Texico was pronounced dead at the scene by the Office of the Medical Investigator. The second crew member was transported to Lubbock, Texas for medical treatment and was listed in stable condition.

The initial investigation revealed two trains collided when one stationary train positioned northbound on the track was struck head-on by a moving southbound train, New Mexico State Police said in a news release.

The stationary train was unmanned.

An executive of Carlsbad-based Southwestern Railroad's parent company said both victims were Southwestern employees and moving a 79-car train that struck a parked 12-car train that was stationary on the siding and had no crew on board.

The crew of the moving train applied its brakes to try to stop, but other specifics of happened and what caused the accident weren't immediately known and would be the subject of a federal investigation, said Bruce Carswell, vice president of operations of The Western Group, an Ogden, Utah-based operator of several short-line railroads.

"There was some braking," Carswell said. "We have only very preliminary information at this point."

Police said they were handling the scene as a hazmat incident due to diesel fuel spilling from the locomotives only. Six locomotives and three freight cars derailed in the crash. Certified hazmat teams were cleaning up and off-loading the remaining fuel from the locomotives.

State Police planned to secure the scene for National Transportation Safety Board investigators. The NTSB team is headed by investigator Ted Turpin and also includes NTSB Board Member Earl Weener, who will act as the team's spokesman, the agency said in a statement. The agency plans to issue a preliminary report within 30 days, a spokesman said.

The moving train's 79 freight cars included 27 cars loaded with sand and 52 empties, while the parked train had two cars carrying molasses and 10 empties, Carswell said.

<http://www.cnjonline.com/2015/04/28/texico-man-dies-in-roswell-train-wreck/>

## **Texico man dies in Roswell train wreck**

April 28, 2015



Courtesy photo Jesse Coburn III of Texico died in this Southwestern train wreck early Tuesday and another unidentified person was seriously injured near Roswell.

*By Brittney Cannon*

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A family member has confirmed Jesse Coburn III, 48, of Texico was killed Tuesday when a freight train struck another train head-on in southeastern New Mexico. Another crew member seriously injured in the crash is also believed to be from Clovis, although officials haven't released names of other victims. State police said the other crew member whose name wasn't immediately released was taken to Lubbock for medical treatment and was in stable condition.

Coburn was an engineer for Southwestern Railroad, according to information on his Facebook page.

"He loved life. He laughed about everything," said Debbie Chadwick, a close friend. "He had a very good heart, and was devoted to his kids and his friends and family. He enjoyed working for the railroad. He just had his birthday on April 21."

Coburn loved the railroad so much, that he worked on his birthday. Chadwick said the only other thing he was just as passionate about were his two daughters, who participated in basketball and track for Farwell.

"His whole life revolved around his kids," Chadwick said. "His daughters were everything; he did everything for them. That's all he wanted was to... watch them get older."

Chadwick said they would laugh together, and enjoyed riding horseback and bicycles through town and going to the park.

"He found humor in everything," Chadwick said.

At 11 a.m. Tuesday, Chadwick received the call from her kids.

"They just asked if I had heard about Jesse, and I said no," she said. "They told me he had the train crash, and that was about the time his girls found out, too, when the station notified the family."

Chadwick said she did not know details of the wreck or how he died, and had not spoken with the railroad yet.

"I just know that the area is obviously a big issue, and something desperately needs to be done about it," she said.

The accident occurred about 6:20 a.m. on a siding — a short section of tracks alongside the main tracks — about 10 miles southeast of Roswell.

An executive of Carlsbad, New Mexico-based Southwestern Railroad's parent company said employees were moving a 79-car train that struck a parked 12-car train that was stationary on the siding and had no crew on board. The crew of the moving train applied its brakes to try to stop, but other specifics of what happened and what caused the accident weren't immediately known and would be the subject of a federal investigation, said Bruce Carswell, vice president of operations of The Western Group, an Ogden, Utah-based operator of several short-line railroads.

"There was some braking," Carswell said. "We have only very preliminary information at this point."

The National Transportation Safety Board said it was sending a team to investigate the accident.

The Federal Railroad Administration also had personnel at the accident, Carswell said.

The NTSB team is headed by investigator Ted Turpin and includes NTSB Board Member Earl Weener, who will act as the team's spokesman, the agency said in a statement. The agency plans to issue a preliminary report within 30 days, NTSB spokesman Peter Knudson said.

The crash resulted in the closure of State Route 2, also known as the Dexter Highway, but U.S. 285, a

nearby larger highway, was not affected, Chaves County Sheriff Britt Snyder said.

The crash location was being treated as a hazardous materials site because of actual or potential spillage of an unknown amount of diesel fuel from the damaged locations, Armijo said. No evacuation was required, officials said.

The moving train's 79 freight cars included 27 cars loaded with sand and 52 empties, while the parked train had two cars carrying molasses and 10 empties, Carswell said. The two trains' locomotives included ones belonging to Southwestern Railroad, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and a third company, he said.

<http://krqe.com/2015/04/28/trains-crash-near-roswell-old-dexter-highway-closed/>

## 1 killed after freight trains collide in southeastern New Mexico

By Chelo Rivera and Cheyenne Cope Published: April 28, 2015, 7:48 am Updated: April 28, 2015, 5:20

**ROSWELL, N.M. (KRQE)** – A rail engineer was killed near Roswell after a moving freight train collided head-on with a stationary train Tuesday morning. The accident happened between Roswell and Dexter alongside State Road 2.

It happened at 6:45 a.m. as a Southwest Railways freight train carrying sand from Clovis to Carlsbad collided head-on with a parked train loaded with molasses.

New Mexico State Police identified the victim as Jesse Coburn, a 48-year-old from Texico. Another train worker was flown to the hospital.

Several locomotives were tossed off the tracks, some ended up on their sides and some of the freight cars smashed through the front of a locomotive.

“We’re probably talking like anywhere from 10 to 20 train cars that have been derailed, so it’s going to be a long process,” said Captain Lance Bateman of New Mexico State Police.

People who live in the usually quiet rural area about 10 miles southeast of Roswell, said the loud crash sounded like it was right next to them. Maria Jimenez said she heard the collision, then she heard ambulances and firetrucks. She said she could also see a lot of movement on the highway.

Local and state police, and fire and rescue squads from miles around responded to the scene.

Some of the fuel from the locomotives was spilled, triggering a hazmat situation.

The accident closed State Road 2 and the rail-line south of Roswell.

Federal investigators on the scene are trying to pinpoint the mistake that led to this collision.

No word yet on how long it will take to get the wreckage cleaned up and removed.