

<http://www.wlky.com/news/2-rj-corman-workers-missing-in-south-carolina-flooding/35702054>

2 R.J. Corman workers killed in South Carolina flooding

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Two R.J. Corman workers were killed in South Carolina after the truck in which they were riding went off a washed-out road near Columbia.

R.J. Corman, which is based in Kentucky, has deployed storm teams for Norfolk Southern in North Carolina and South Carolina. The company said about 95 workers and equipment were used to help Norfolk Southern repair rail lines damaged in the flooding.

A spokesman from R.J. Corman said a pickup truck with five workers was heading back to a hotel around 1:30 a.m. Wednesday when it went off the road in Eastover, near Columbia, South Carolina.

Three men escaped from the truck, but two men and the truck disappeared.

The bodies of Robert Bradford Vance, 58, of Lexington, Kentucky, and Ricky Allen McDonald, 53, of Chesapeake, Ohio, were recovered Wednesday afternoon.

The incident is under investigation.

<http://www.kentucky.com/2015/10/07/4076168/two-rj-corman-employees-die-in.html>

R.J. Corman releases statement after 2 employees die in South Carolina floodwaters

By Justin Madden

jmadden@herald-leader.com October 7, 2015

Two R.J. Corman employees died Wednesday morning when South Carolina floodwaters swept their truck away.

Noel Rush, R.J. Corman spokesman, said five men had left a job site about 1:30 a.m. in Eastover, S.C., near Columbia, after repairing track washouts. The men were heading to their motel when their pickup truck plunged onto a blacktop road that had disappeared beneath 10 to 12 feet of water.

The truck was washed away. Three of the men were able to get to safety and called for help to find the other two men, Rush said. Emergency crews found the two men about 1 p.m. Wednesday.

Richland County Coroner Gary Watts identified the men as Robert Bradford Vance, 58, of Lexington, and Ricky Allen McDonald, 53, of Chesapeake, Ohio. Their bodies were pulled from a submerged vehicle, The State newspaper reported.

The State also reported that the men drove through a barricade and left the road.

But R.J. Corman is disputing reports about a barricade. Rush said that there was not a barricade, nor were there any signs on the road. The railroad company is working with public safety agencies to determine what happened.

The men were a part of the railroad company's storm team, a group of railroad workers who repair weather-ravaged railroad track.

The three survivors were flown back to Kentucky to be reunited with their families and receive grief counseling.

"This is a very sad, sad, sad event," Rush said. "We are very much affected by this. We are praying for the family and friends of our employees."

R.J. Corman released the following statement late Wednesday:

"It is with great sadness that we confirm that R. J. Corman Railroad Group lost two employees today as a result of a pickup truck accident on the flood-damaged Congaree Road in Eastover, South Carolina.

"In the early hours of the morning, an R. J. Corman truck carrying five employees fell into a large hole in the road created by floodwaters. Three of the five men were able to get out of the truck and to safety. Unfortunately, two of the employees were not able to escape the floodwaters. They were located later, following an extensive search and rescue effort.

"The employees who lost their lives were Ricky McDonald, 53, of Chesapeake, Ohio and Bob Vance, 58, of Lexington, Kentucky. They had been employed with R. J. Corman for 6 years and 3 years, respectively.

"We are in the process of gathering more information about the accident and are fully cooperating with an ongoing official investigation. However, the most current information we have indicates that our employees acted in a cautious manner and one in compliance with internal policies and road restrictions. Although initial reports incorrectly stated that R. J. Corman employees had evaded barricades and ignored road closure signs, South Carolina State Highway Patrol has confirmed reports

that those signs and barricades were improperly placed, giving the employees the impression that only the opposite side of the road from which they were traversing was closed. Preliminary investigation reports lead us to believe the leading cause of the accident will be attributed to inadequate warning.

"We are grateful to the first responders at the scene who assisted our employees and conducted the search for the missing men. Their dedication and professionalism are deeply appreciated.

"We also wish to thank all those who have expressed their concern. While we are thankful for the safe return of three of the employees involved, we are deeply saddened by the loss of two of our own. We ask for continued thoughts and prayers for the families and loved ones of Mr. McDonald, Mr. Vance, the survivors and all those impacted as we cope with this difficult loss."

<http://www.fox19.com/story/30204214/sheriff-barricade-on-congaree-rd-moved-before-truck-drove-through>

Sheriff: Somebody else moved barricade before truck drove off road and two men died

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By WIS Staff

EASTOVER, SC (WIS) -



The barricade meant to keep people from driving on Congaree Road in Lower Richland County was moved by somebody else before a truck full of five railroad repair employees went off the road into the water, authorities said on Thursday.

Three of the men escaped the flooded area. Two others, identified as Robert Bradford Vance, 58, of Lexington, KY, and Ricky Allen McDonald, 53, of Chesapeake, OH, drowned.

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said Thursday that initially it was believed the driver of the truck moved the barricades off the road, which had been closed for four days because of a washout. "They were not moved by the victims," Lott said. "We're getting real tired of people moving barricades."

Rescuers found the first body around noon on Wednesday. The second body was found an hour later. Deputies were called to the scene in the 2100 block of Congaree Road at about 3 a.m. on Wednesday where the roadway had been washed away by flooding.

The pickup went off the road in the washout. Three people managed to get out of the truck and get to safety, but they told emergency crews two other people in the truck did not.

Teams searched the area in rescue boats and dive gear.

The victims are employees of R.J. Corman Railroad Group. The five people reportedly were part of a railroad flood response team. According to the company's website, the company has an office in Chapin.

Richland County was under a curfew Wednesday morning from midnight until 6 a.m. Emergency officials, including Gov. Nikki Haley, have been warning people since the flooding started not to drive around barricades set up on roads or remove them.