

Pilot identified in fatal aircraft crash

Aircraft will be locked inside a hanger for further investigation

BY JOSH JONES

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MT. VERNON — The pilot killed in a fatal ultralight aircraft crash on Tuesday afternoon has been identified.

Jason Pearson, 39, of McLeansboro was identified as the pilot and was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to a press release from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO), the JCSO received a call at 3:58 p.m. Tuesday about a possible plane crash in the area of North Chestnut and East Liberty Road.

Minutes later JCSO deputies would arrive on scene and located the aircraft and Pearson. JCSO Chief Deputy Clint Taylor discussed how the aircraft was located.

"Witnesses saw the plane go down and called our office and directed the deputies in the direction they saw the plane go down," Taylor said. "It was really tough terrain, deputies could not drive to it. Two of them had to walk through waste deep water in a creek to get to it."

According to Taylor, the JCSO was on scene until Wednesday morning as he mentioned the duties of the JCSO responding to the crash.

"They found the crash site, of course checked on the pilot and secured the site," Taylor said.

Agencies that responded to the incident include the JCSO, Jefferson Fire Protection District, Mt. Vernon Police Department, Mt. Vernon Fire Department and Litton Ambulance.

Mt. Vernon Outland Airport Director Chris Collins discussed what he witnessed on scene.

Pilot:

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"I got the call at right about 4 o'clock and went over there it was close to the airport. So I was there pretty quick," Collins said. "And first responders, sherriff's deputies and one Mt. Vernon officer I think was there. A couple guys on an ATV and they located the crash."

After discovering the crash site and hearing conformation that the crash was indeed fatal, Collins mentioned that he contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

"A part 103 ultralight vehicle is what the FAA calls these type of aircraft there was a determination as to what type of investigation," Collins said. "If they would come then or would they wait until the morning and they made the decision to wait un-

til the morning."

Collins mentioned that Pearson who was a private aircraft owner and one of the hanger tenants at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport as he mentioned what is next for the investigation.

"We just went out and did an initial investigation and the FAA has released the aircraft to a team here and we are going to recover the aircraft and lock it up inside a hanger," Collins said. "For them to come back down and do a thorough investigation. ... And the aircraft is officially property of the National Transportation Safety Board until they tell us further."

Collins asked for the community to pray for the family of Pearson.

"He loved aviation more than anybody I know and I just want everybody to pray for his wife and his mom and dad," Collins said. "They are just all great people and this is just a tragic loss for all us."

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