

Mount Vernon man killed in helicopter crash

Crash took place Monday afternoon in rural Washington County

SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

WASHINGTON COUNTY — A helicopter crash in rural Washington County on Monday afternoon claimed the life of a Mount Vernon resident.

Washington County Coroner Mark Styninger reported that his office was dispatched at 2 p.m. Monday to the scene of the crash, which he described as a remote agricultural area north of the Oakdale Blacktop and west of Garfield Road.

According to Styninger, the pilot and sole occupant of the helicopter, 41-year-old Donald L. Pruett of Mount Vernon, was pronounced dead at the scene at 2:22 p.m.

The helicopter was a crop dusting aircraft owned by Kash Helicopter Company.

“The wreckage was found in a cornfield approximately one half of a mile from the roadway and under overhead power lines,” Styninger noted in a statement issued Monday night. “It is unclear if the aircraft struck the power lines.”

The Federal Aviation Agency was contacted to investigate the crash.

Styninger said Pruett’s death appeared to be caused by blunt force trauma. An autopsy is scheduled to take place in O’Fallon.

Responding agencies included Washington County Ambulance Service, Washington County Sheriff’s Department, Nashville Fire Department, Illinois State Police and the Washington County Coroner’s Office.

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