National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

Mr. Peter Gintautas

~~Director of Health, Safety and Environment~~ Environmental Protection Specialist

Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission

Dear Mr. Gintautas,

Reference: Interview Regarding the (April 17, 2017 accident in Firestone, Colorado, -- NTSB accident number: DCA-17-FP-005).

Attached is a redacted transcript of your interview that was conducted on May 26, 12, 2017. The redacted transcript of the interview is provided directly to you, the interviewee, for review and identifying any typographical errors." Please look over this interview for accuracy and make any necessary editorial changes.

You may either reference the relevant page and line number along with the suggested change or redline a copy of the document. Please initial any changes when marking up or redlining the original document.

When replying be sure and checkmark one of the three statements below, even if you have no changes. Please submit replies to me via email no later than July ~~3, 2018.~~ received 13 June 2019

I have reviewed my transcript(s) from the above referenced accident and…

☐ I have no comments to make.

☐ My comments are submitted herewith.

☒ My comments are marked on the attached copy.

Please note that this transcript must be treated as confidential at this time. This transcript is for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone or email.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation,

Chuck Koval, Pipeline Incident Investigation Analyst

National Transportation Safety Board

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APPEARANCES:

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DAVID McBRIDE, Vice President of Health, Safety & Environment
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National Transportation Safety Board

Not present on 12 May 2017

for advice on that. And Mike had said he'd rather somebody else provide that advice and that happened to be me.

I live about a mile away from the site so it wasn't very long before I was over there. And the 20th we collected -- there were a lot of people there on the 20th. I could not name all of those people are even tell you who they all were. But there was a large delegation both from insurance companies, fire investigators, the fire department, people from our staff, police, and we collected a soil gas sample from the end of -- there was a trench that was already in existence from I think from the day before that had followed the pipeline up to near the oil. And there was maybe a foot or foot and a half of dirt that had not been excavated right near the foundation.

I -- we used a soil -- what's called a slide hammer. It's about 3 feet. You can make a 3-foot deep hole with it. It's quarter to half -- I guess maybe a half an inch wide. You can then stick a tube in and get some gas sampled. I measured, you know, gas there. There were hydrocarbons, combustible hydrocarbons in it, using my ~~for~~ four gas meter and then hand collected it using a little hand pump into a -- a bag specifically designed for gas samples and labeled it, put it back in my vehicle. So I had custody of it. And over the course of the day we did that at three -- three total places. One in the window well of the neighbor's house, at 3610 as I -- I'm not sure what the neighbor's house number is. But the -- just to the west there was a

provided it to Chief Puccetti by email as we got it.

Then the third time I was anywhere around the site was May 10th. So Tuesday this week. And our staff had been arranging to have ~~soul~~ soil gas survey done using that kind of probe and quite a bit had been done already, even starting the week before. But there were some other spots they wanted to get over near Oak Meadow Drive, Boulevard, whatever the proper name is for that street where we're getting very high gas readings in the soil at 2 or 3 feet of 100 percent by volume methane.

And I believe that's -- it's a different map, but I believe that's -- there's a map ~~Stewart~~ Stuart has on the back of this. Make sure I'm looking at the map right. That's over about here in this area along the -- the road coming in. So --

Q. Do you know the --

A. It's Oak Meadow Drive or Oak Meadow --

MR. LEPORE: Boulevard.

MR. GINTAUTAS: Oh Boulevard. Okay.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Which one?

A. Oak Meadow Boulevard.

Q. Okay.

A. So this -- the pipeline -- I don't know exactly, or I've not been involved in trying to dig that up. I know there was a trench dug there at some point in the earlier days because I saw the depression still. But we -- along two or three places, I think

three at least, along there we got ~~ratings~~ readings at 2 or 3 feet of 100 percent by methane and in that earlier part of the survey when I wasn't there. And we wanted to reproduce that and also ~~do~~ to further define it out to this side. So some more points were added to our soil survey out across on the west side of Oak Boulevard there.

And there were also some monitoring holes being drilled with another one of our staff was there. And he was supervising that with the contractor using a little -- a geo probe which is a small drilling ~~rafg~~ rig on a track mounted rig. There was also contractors for Anadarko who were doing something very similar with another geo probe rig. And I -- I have talked to them. I know who they are. We've worked -- they've worked for us too before.

I mostly was there to coordinate with the -- the contractor that was doing the soil gas survey for us. And as the last thing we went back to the third house in that row which is four, I think. But whatever the first numbers are, to check the backyard to see if there were any levels of methane in the -- in there which we got background levels. Because the -- the homeowner had asked us to. And we did that as a -- I believe those were communicated to her that same afternoon by my supervisor or my manager in Denver because I had called them and sent them an email with information as well.

That's, you know, other than internal discussions, that's been my part of the investigation. I'm not -- you know, I'm not -- I was not there when the pipes were exposed originally and those

to just kind of either rule in or rule that out as being anywhere similar to -- I can tell generalities about the sales gas that comes in. But and you can look it up. And I think you'd go to Black Hills Energy and they probably have a -- an MSDS that says their gas they sell in the lines is 97 percent methane. This gas that we're seeing is not 97 percent methane. It's a lot less. You know, and the ratio to the other hydrocarbons. But I -- I -- it would still be better to have a real -- even if we did it today it's still -- I mean, you know, in the future it would still be a reasonable thing to do.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Now you -- the shale -- and I'm going to use the term shale gas for simplicity.

A. Sure.

Q. Is shale gas composition any different than the normal vertical well composition for example, or would it be pulled out in this area?

A. Not really because a lot of the verticals are in the same formations. A lot of the -- there are some different, some deeper wells in the verticals that the J-Sand is a deeper, older rock. It's been heated up more. It has a different isotopic composition. It's still the generally wet gas that the gasses in the Denver Basin are not dry gases. They're not just methane. The ~~(indiscernible)~~ coal bed methane gases in southeastern Colorado and southwestern Colorado are 99.9 percent methane. You don't see any

Q. For now if you have --
A. I -- the -- the -- I took the water samples out of the sump and the LTE contractor who was there I think at Anadarko's request collected the gas sample for the fire department and had it analyzed. I think Anadarko had it analyzed.
Q. And do you remember what day that was?
A. That's the 27th.
Q. Yeah.
A. April 27th.
MR. LEPORE: Sorry may I?
MR. PRUNK: Sure.
BY MR. LEPORE:
Q. Have you seen the results of the samples taken from the ~~front~~ French drains? It's Matt Lepore.
A. There were French drain samples taken on the 19th when I wasn't there. I was -- that's from the house that burned. I have seen that. That was given to us I think by Anadarko or the fire -- I don't -- I think Anadarko paid for it to be done. I don't actually know who provided it to us. It was shown to me very shortly after we got it, probably the 21st or something like that. They were on extreme rush with the lab. All of us had taken him to the same lab essentially and they were overwhelmed but they did a very good job.
I've seen that one. It's, you know, different than -- I took a sample from the French drain from the house next door which had

on the 10th had a geo probe which is a small push drill rig that can go down through soft things. And we put in some 1-inch holes down here, maybe here, and a string along here. And I don't know the exact distance but we put in several along the back of these houses here. They were for -- to allow us to monitor better. They're 10 feet deep. The 5 foot of perforated casing and then the top part is a solid casing and there's some ~~bent night~~ bentonite seal at the -- the 5 feet so that it will -- won't be getting oxygen down into the hole. They have a cap on them. We're trying to build a little sampling port so we can get data on a routine basis.

And I think John -- my supervisor's plan was maybe to get that done daily for a little while. We also put in a couple 2-inch holes over here that were designed to be vent holes so that gases come up in the higher part. I think this geoscientist which was who was doing a similar study for Anadarko was doing something similar. I don't know that they'd finished that when I left on the tenth. And I haven't conversed with anybody about that since then.

They reported to me when we were there that the greatest concentration of methane, or of combustible gases, let's put it that way, was at about 20 feet in the -- that hole that they put in there. Which I'm not really sure what depth the pipeline was ever at. That's part of my -- I'm surprised by it being at depth because the gas should try to -- it's buoyant. It should be coming up through the soil.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. This is -- this is Ravi. So near the Oak Meadows, we are still getting gas readings at the depth of 80 feet you said?

A. 20.

Q. 20 feet.

A. 20.

Q. And what are the readings?

A. I do not know what they had. They just told me the highest reading they got in the hole was at 20 feet. I just -- I don't have a number for you.

Q. Okay.

A. I just don't know. And they had wandered about 26 feet and that probably -- compared to coming up, that's probably a barrier to most of the gas migration if there is really a water table there with water in the -- in the shallow aquafer. That would be something we are -- I know we've considered and I don't where it stands. And we've talked about putting in -- potentially putting in some monitoring wells to see what is in the water, if it's methane or if there's, you know, methane is -- could be traveling in a plume.

We've had one instance in Colorado that we know of where methane was high enough in the water and coming out of the water that there was a fire in the house in ~~(indiscernible)~~ Bondad Colorado about 12, 15 years ago.

Q. This is natural gas slipping out, no -- no leaks from

A. Yeah.
Q. -- CBM type of gas? (Indiscernible).
A. Yeah, yeah. We know what isotopic -- we have a lot of data from that both from coal cores done by the USGS, 25 -- some length of time ago. It has a much different isotopic signature. And it also is basically 100 percent methane. No --
Q. So the variability that you think you're seeing in the gas then would logically lead you to conclude that it's either from a single source being degraded by heat or some other interference that you haven't yet figured out or you've got potentially a second source that you haven't accounted for.
A. Yes. Those are two working hypotheses, right.
Q. Okay. So I just want to make sure I captured what you're --
A. Right those are -- you know, if -- in monitoring over some length of time, we don't' see reductions in the soil gas concentrations, that leads to the other -- the -- the second part of that that maybe there is another well, another pipe, a natural seep. We've not seen natural seeps of gas from that deep in -- in well -- you know, in this part of the ~~(indiscernible)~~ basin. I don't -- there are places in the world where gas comes up from depths like that to the surface and causes problems.

I -- I don't -- it doesn't -- it doesn't necessarily not happen here but we don't -- we've never been able to find any. We've done -- so I'm actually looking about it because we -- we've actually considered that as a possibility for some of the water

A. Yeah.

MR. LEPORE: Same day.

MR. GINTAUTAS: I had to look it up. I really didn't -- I was down there. I remembered it was the middle of April and I had to look in our records because I didn't really believe it. Yeah.

MR. LEONARD: (Indiscernible).

MR. GINTAUTAS: Yeah.

MR. LEONARD: One year to the date in the same town, but it was totally unrelated.

MR. GINTAUTAS: Yeah.

BY MR. McBRIDE:

Q. Utility gas, you haven't yet seen the analysis?

A. I have not. I have not any -- not any from sampling. I -- I -- I think that John ~~Axel, (ph.)~~ Axelson who's my supervisor, went out and found their MSDS sheet for what the product that they provide. And it had a range. And I think was maybe 95 to 97 percent methane, and, you know, they may not have even said what the other parts were. That's not the ratio we're seeing in these. That's a pretty dry gas. And -- and that's what I'd expect to get -- to get the 1,000, 1,010, 1,020 BTU per cubic foot. You can't have that much propane in that -- in that methane in there. Their BTU content is quite a bit higher.

Q. Well while you were on site have you -- did you hear anybody reference or talk about the utility backed gas, basically utility companies responding straight from the pipeline (indiscernible)

25 degrees it's about -- I've used it in labs here. It's -- it's a liquid, but it boils away very rapidly in -- in the room. It's not very useful here in Colorado. It is still liquid at this kind of temperature at sea level because there's more pressure. So I don't -- I think pentane would still come up. It just might take longer.

Q. But you don't believe it can go down, right?

A. I -- I don't --

Q. Because it's kind of --

A. -- think it's that -- it's still a gas probably here because the pressure. I think the gases are going to be buoyant compared to water.

Q. But should that be any kind of liquid in the line? What will happen? An actual liquid, like crude?

A. It probably would go down with rain, you know, water percolating through the soils there and go into the water table and that's one of the reasons to think about having a -- a monitoring well.

Q. And how -- how frequent is it for liquid to come associated with those gas in the produced well? Is that common?

A. It is in -- but it -- I think this may have been after, if I understood it, this gas was after the ~~separate~~ separator maybe. I'm not sure of that.

MR. LEONARD: I'm sorry?

MR. GINTAUTAS: It's the gas that was in that line after the

Q. Okay.
A. I don't -- I don't know enough about that particular well and whether, you know, I didn't -- I've looked at the production or if I don't remember if it made liquids, much liquids or not. In terms of hydrocarbon liquids I don't think it did. But there still is a heavier component in the gas phase.
Q. Okay.
A. And -- and that could go in another direction.
MR. AJIBOYE: That's it. I'm done.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay.
MR. LEONARD: I have a question.
MR. CHHATRE: Go ahead.
BY MR. LEONARD:
Q. Mike Leonard. Peter, on this -- on this drawing of -- of the subdivision you notice there's a -- there's a line that says, existing gas line to be -- what does it say? Relocated?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Do you know if that line is still there?
A. I do not. I looked at this. ~~Stewart~~ Stuart had this outside this morning. And we looked at it. And I don't. That -- that's why I have Duke (ph.) in my head and not -- DCP in my head and not --
Q. My second question would be --
A. I don't know.
Q. -- where the existing current flow line or the -- the old flow lines, where they cross, is that -- if that line wasn't

relocated, is that potentially near where --
A. Yes, yes, it is.
Q. Okay. And would the gas composition be the same in that line?
A. It -- it could still be. If it's on their way to the gas plant, not on their way to -- after the gas plant --
Q. On the way back.
A. If it's --
Q. If it's being gathered, not --
A. Yes, yes.
Q. It could be the --
A. Yes.
Q. The composition could be the same.
A. Yes, it could.
Q. So we could throw this back at --
A. And then -- yeah. That's --
Q. Maybe he could go --
A. Right, yes. That -- that one -- there is a marker right here today and it says it's Black Hills Energy. Right at this corner. I -- I saw it the other day and I -- I watched the utility -- I -- I didn't know whose it was and I watched the utility locates guy go up to it. And I -- I -- we went over afterwards and it said it was Black Hills Energy. Right at this corner of Firestone Boulevard.
Q. Have you been to the -- the tank battery? The ~~coolers~~ closest tank

of a -- you know, if it comes to be something else, if it's the line going to a gas plant where they do the dehyd and separate ethane, propane off to sell separately the composition would look very similar to what we see now. If it's after the gas plant and it's on its way back to somebody to sell -- buy it then it would probably be the methane mix that we're talking about with the 1,000 or 1,050 BTU content. That's not what we're seeing.

So I -- I don't -- I mean I just don't -- so far there's nothing indicating a higher level -- you know, a methane -- a high methane concentration that's only with the gas of 1,000 or 1,050 BTUs. The -- the calculations that I saw from the gas samples from the soil were like the -- if it was pure hydrocarbons it would have been 1,300 BTUs. That's probably very much like the production gas --

Q. Okay.

A. -- that we have samples for.

Q. And what is your second hypothesis? You say that that's one hypothesis.

A. Well that's -- those are two really. They're two --

Q. Which one?

A. It's been shut off or it hasn't been shut off.

Q. Okay. All right.

A. You know.

Q. Now, going back now you said the readings are not decreasing. So all the readings we have taken so far, all of them are not