

# **BNSF Casselton Train Derailment**

## **Command Post Timeline**

**Date:** December 30, 2013

**Time of Call:** 1413 hours (Received by RRRDC)

**Scribe:** Deputy Joe Crawford

1550- HP 285 @ command post for Highway Patrol

1557-3515 T. Briggeman staying at Command post assigning tasks

1557- 3509 on scene

1608- Working on contingency to re-route traffic.

1609- HP349 on Interstate

1610- 3500 Paul Laney assigned command post

1611- Called back another MSQ 10mph

1614-Everyone needs to be at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away from derailment site per Sheriff Laney.

1614- Contacted 3515 to let all troopers/deputies know.

1615- 3537 J. Crawford assigned to command post at scribe took over for Sgt. Dean Haaland

1620- TOC activated per 3500, 3502-Judy Tollefson manning TOC

1624- 4 deputies in staging all others in field working perimeter and scene safety.

1625- 3516 G. Smith on scene, 3519 C. Fix on scene with keys to Casselton School.

1625- RJ Corman derailment services on scene, with another derailment clean-up crew en-route.

1625-3539 T. Morris PIO doing media release

1630- 3515 finding maps of Casselton

1632- 3500 decided to open up Casselton School as our command post, media, VIP, etc.

1633- Casselton fire fighters to meet at fire hall with 5 deputies to begin volunteer evacuation of Casselton residences south of smoke plume. Deputies went door to door.

1635- EMS notified Red Cross to respond in case shelter is needed.

1635- Media release sent our per. 3539.

1639- VIP briefing, staging area set up in Central Cass up and running.

1640- All parties moved into the Central Cass School and currently being setup.

1643- Command post moved inside Casselton school, 5 deputies and 5 firefighters on scene being briefed and will be going door to door south of the derailment.

1648- EMS setting up radio communications in Casselton School.

1650- Media is staging south gym per 3539 ONLY!!!

1652- 3500 updates fire chief about any rural evacuations/pets temporary staging area is at Central Cass.

1653- Door 6 is only door open to the school and will be used as the only access point during this incident. Please check in and out for accountability with door security deputy.

1654- 3500 wants names of families effected/evacuating where they are going, contact info etc.

1700- Voluntary evacuations of Casselton given for immediate area surrounding derailment site.

1700- 3539 activated code red for Western and Southern portion of Casselton. Deputies and Firefighters deployed on foot to communicate this voluntary evacuation notice to residence.

1703- Voluntary evacuation area established BNSF railroad tracks south to the golf course/ 6<sup>th</sup> Ave to the West side of Casselton.

1710- Weather update -7 NNW winds 12 MPH 71% humidity and -12 dew point.

1710- Red Cross on scene setting up.

1711- Update from BNSF 12 hrs. estimated time for the oil to burn out of the tank cars per Ken Pawluk relayed info.

1714- Per Ed from Red Cross the Special needs and all long term shelter will be Discovery Middle School.

1719- Doug Murphy Fargo Cass Public Health en-route per Rick Cameron

1720- Snomobiles here and ready to deploy Operators: Deputy Bob Simmons and Deputy Matt Oldham

1721- Update reunification for kids will be here at Central Cass as a temp shelter. Permanent shelter is at Discovery middle school 1717 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S Fargo

1722- TOC info will go through 3515 phone number [REDACTED]-public number

1726- Population of Casselton 2432 estimated using goggle

1727- Estimated that 10 oil cars involved, 2 locomotives, and several grain cars involved in the derailment.

1728- Mayor Ed McConnell on scene

1730- Update given by Fargo Hazmat to 3500 County commission chair, Ed McConnell, BN, and others.

1739-Gress arrived with S.O. (TOC) radios from the West station.

1745-3508 Dewey in charge of short term shelter reunification. He is to document names, addresses, etc.

1750- NWS mapping projected wind forecast with oil/smoke overlay.

1757- Deputy Joe Gress 3548 en-route to West Fargo to get the communications trailer from West Fargo PD

1759- 3539 spoke to media on scene discussed possible press conference at 1930. Brandy Pile from Casselton here for Facebook media.

1800- 2<sup>nd</sup> evacuation everything south of RR tracks discussed needed to notify HP's deputies, code red etc. This is because of a high pressure system changing wind direction. Evacuation encouraged to be done by 8:45-9:00pm due to possible wind shifts around 9:00-10:00pm.

1814- Highway 18 South of Casselton to include the east side of Everest Township and all of Durbin townships under volunteer evacuations.

1819-BNSF, 3500, Fargo hazmat, Casselton fire, discussed particulates in the crude and other chemicals that could be a hazard if exposed.

1820- 3500 said best thing is to do is to encourage all of Casselton to evacuate due to possible health concerns, changing wind directions, etc.

1823- All status checks done on all deputies....Code 4 3510 advised

1826- All Casselton water towers, trucks are filled, and the underground bubble is currently being filled. Casselton also has a dry hydrant if needed they can use as well.

1826- Cass rural water also notified of incident

1828- Special hazmat team from Dallas Fort Worth, and Minot en-route to scene. ETA is 2100 hrs.

1830-Assistant Chief Mike Retian and Deputy Gress arrived with West Fargo communication trailer/radios and antenna.

1833- Mitch Burris and a Casselton fire fighter went to days inn/hotel in Casselton to let them know what's going on and to possibly save rooms for crews that will be arriving in the coming hours/days.

1833- Cass County health dept. here and wanted to pass on that Stacy Ebrel their PIO from Bismarck [REDACTED] wanted to let us know she can help if needed.

1837- Talked to rural water supplies from rural fire departments to see how many tenders they can get to stage in Casselton to help when BNSF hazmat arrives. BNSF hazmat thinks they will need 40,000 gallons of water to mix with their chemicals to help put out the fire.

1838- Eric Swenson-3526 is changing door security at the school with Keith Anderson 3561.

1843- Sheriff Laney activates ERT teams A and B to report to Casselton School for assignments.

1843- Casselwood retirement home manager en-route to meet Sheriff Deputy waiting to standby.

1845-3500 Gave code red order to activate A and B staff, 3539 contacted dispatch to send code red message.

1848- Ethanol plant personnel on scene wanted to speak to 3500 Sheriff Laney.

1851- Tara Morris3539 doing press release about evacuating all of Casselton by 2100 hrs. Once again re-unification is at Casselton School, Discovery middle school is long term. This evacuation is due to the possible wind shift coming later tonight.

1856- Dr. Baird, and Ruth Bachmeier from Fargo Cass Public Health en-route to Casselton to assist.

1859- No changes from the NWS on weather/wind.

1900- Sheriff's office courtesy called Fargo PD to let them know about long term housing will be at Discovery middle school in Fargo asked if a patrolmen could stop in from time to time.

1910- Code Red given for ERT teams A and B to respond to Casselton for train derailment.

1911- Voluntary evacuations given for all of Casselton due to wind shifting to the West and a high pressure system that will force the smoke and chemicals to the ground.

1911- Mitch returned from hotel awaiting orders. Sheriff's Office members notified Club 94, Gordy's, Days inn. Contact was also made to Lowell Gunderson, Aaron Cole and Lacey Radermacher(1850)-per Mitch

1912- Press conference pushed back to 2030 due to Dr. Baird wants to be here to stress health concerns.

1921- I called into TOC spoke with Dave Rogness about declaring an emergency declaration. Dave relayed that the evacuation order needs to be given by commission chair which needs to verbally declare it. Info passed onto 3500/3539.

1921- 3539 in talking with local media.

1928- Partial code red text message sent out. Brandy Pile showed this to SGT Morris.

1933- Ed McConnell and 3500 discussed emergency declaration.

1933- Jamie a concerned Casselton citizen called about her grandparents at 601 Langer Ave in Casselton. She has not spoken with them but would like deputies to do a welfare check on them. Info passed onto Sgt. Halland.

1945- John Collins MN talk radio called for an update on evacuations and has questions for Tara.

1950- 3513 relayed that 25 residence in Casselwood all evacuating at this time.

2000- ABC news called and had questions for PIO.

2000- ERT teams A and B arriving 10 deputies present.

2025- Stepped out to find 3539 a power cord and charging unit for her laptop.

2027- Federal rail officer on scene

2028- Most ERT teams A and B present briefed by Sheriff Laney, Mitch, Halland.

2029- Updated info from state health dept. coming to Tara's email.

2045- Sheriff Laney and Capt. Burris into debrief ERT teams A and B.

2056- BNSF Hazmat teams arrived will be evaluating the situation shortly.

2057- 3500, Dr. Baird, hazmat teams had a meeting.

2057- 3539 informed me that Ken Pawluk declared an emergency declaration during media release info passed on and documented.

2102- ERT A and B teams released to patrol duties in Casselton.

2106- 3519 went to disarm schools alarm system.

2130- Air filtration masks are being delivered by FM ambulance.

2144- Deputy Gress advised Red Cross here with Cots, They will be placed back in the library for those who want to get some rest-per 3519.

2155- BNSF air monitoring teams arriving shortly, BNSF is also evaluating derailment area.

2208- Command meeting minutes:

Good result on evacuation of Casselton residence, media info, and people listening to the orders.

Casselton fire- 8 guys from fire dept., BNSF, and Fargo hazmat evaluating scene, still many cars burning.

Fargo Cass Public Health- working on assessing vulnerable adults/wheel chair

Casselwood evacuated Cass housing is currently being checked on for assistance.

Approx. 35 deputies are in the Casselton area

BNSF is sending out air quality officers to test air quality/particulates around Casselton.

60 minutes from now BNSF will have an update

NTSB is sending an investigation team from Washington D.C. should be arriving before noon tomorrow.

N-95 masks are here and being distributed to deputies.

Meeting adjourned.

2220- WBI energy called into the TOC which was forwarded onto 3515 to let us know that their pipeline that runs through Casselton approx.( 1.5 miles west and .5 miles north) was shut down due to derailment.

2233- Trevor Bjerke from Casselton Vet wants a phone call if winds pick up and would be affecting animals at the vet. [REDACTED]

2235- BNSF hazmat crews from Dallas arrived.

2248- 65% of Casselton evacuated...estimated Per Sheriff Laney.

2305-Several calls have come in about drivers having trouble on state highway 18 due to a shift in the winds. Deputies/troopers have been dispatched to evaluate the smoke and visibility.

### **December 31, 2013**

Midnight command meeting 12-31-13

65% of Casselton has left town and has followed orders very well.

State department's backs us 100%

4-5 EVAC 's have been done, some if these families stayed with family/friends others were taken to Discovery middle school.

19 citizens from Casselton are at Discovery, and 2 pets.

Casselwood retirement home evacuated

County Engineer:

6-10 truckloads of sand delivered, drivers have been sent home and are on call if needed.

Casselton fire: standby no update

EMS- Public housing has been checked on some residence are staying put while other have evacuated.

Troopers-Standby no update

City of Casselton-Standby no update

From the earlier meeting with the 8 that went and surveyed the derailment site reported the following:

15-20 tank cars are burning crude oil

15 grain cars have tipped over and are on their side

2 locomotives are a total loss/burned

The tank cars that are full are not pressurized at this time. The best case is to let the tank cars burn and then re-assess at first light.

In the meantime demolition of the grain cars will begin. The cars and their contents will be pushed by bulldozers to the north. Once the tank cars are safe to handle might be sometime mid-afternoon they will be also pushed to the north so all debris is contained.

Dylan and his team will be working tonight on the grain cars. Contact info will be passed on.

CTEH (Center for Toxicology & Environmental Health) team has been deployed and will be on the ground shortly. Departed from Little Rock, AR

Meeting adjourned

0030- Sheriff Laney met with command staff on scale backs for tonight, as well as gearing up for tomorrow.

0100-Several members of IAT, and all ERT team members A and B sent home. The IAT deputies were given specific times to report back. 3539 sent home to be back at 0600. 3519 was sent home to be back at 0800.

0200- CTEH arrived briefed and escorted by deputies around the Casselton.

0220- Demolition and removal of grain cars is going on. Low glow from oil still left burning.

0250- Minneapolis star tribune called for an update on the incident. We talked about air quality, evacuations, and the weather conditions.

0300- Command meeting led by CTEH staff Alan Nye.

S.O. Wait and prepare

Low level of organic compounds which could also be a false reading were noted

No sulfurs or carbon monoxide detected

No gas substrates have been detected however some particulates have been detected to a level to just remain indoors.

Central air heating systems will filter some of the particles which will help.

Going between your car and a business, or a short time outside is OK, but once again only go out if you have to.

Updates for tomorrows forecast which will be updated at 0700 meeting.

Temps, wind, and fire on site will determine pollutants. Removing cars from the wreckage will help in dispersing the particles.

CTEH will be looking for good right of way to hang canisters that will monitor the air for 24 hrs.

Look for an evaluation to be done and based upon the 1200 air quality report to open up a Casselton to all citizens, but 3500 won't make the decision until closer to noon. He wants to hear what CTEH has to advise first.

Tara will be advised to do a media release at 0600 to inform residences and businesses to stay put until noon.

As long as you don't have any lung or breathing issues you should be OK to go without an N-95 mask. The very old, and the very young should stay inside.

Alan C. Nye PH.D from CTEH staff praised the Sheriff's Office and deputies for their preparation and professionalism during this incident. Alan is their senior toxicologist. [REDACTED]

0335- Don Haney from KFGO called looking for a media update. All is quiet.

0345-John Trierweiler from KVLV TV 11 will be here to do a ride along with Cpl. Tony Krogh at approx. 0430-0500hrs.

0430-John Trierweiler arrived for a ride along.

0440- Naomi from the twin cities media called for an update on percentage of Casselton got evacuated, was an engineer hurt, and weather conditions.

0440- Jeneva Anderson [REDACTED] from North Dakota Emergency Management called looking for an update on air quality in the Casselton area. Wanted to know if the press release can be streamed? Jeneva would also like a phone call after the 0700 meeting. Info passed onto 3539.

0500-Sheriff Laney phone interview with CNN



0530- Mayor Ed McConnell arrived.

0545- Keith Burndt arrived for the day.

0550-BNSF police supervisor from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area arrived.

0555-a Casselton resident called and wanted to know if it was safe to return. I advised her to watch the 0900 media briefing that will be televised and make her decision off of that. She said that her and her husband are currently in Fargo and will watch the media for updates.

0600-Blake Nicholson called from the Bismarck press called inquiring about an update.

0600-Sgt Morris arrived

0610- Sheriff Laney spoke to CNN again on conditions, weather, air clarity etc.

0615- Tim McLean Fire Chief from Casselton arrived.

0615-Several members of Fargo Fire arrived.

0630-Other command staff personnel began arriving for the 0700 command meeting, other local media KVLV/KFGO arrived.

0635-NDHP arrived.

## 0700- Command meeting notes:

3500- Quiet from the S.O. side, text book evacuation, good cooperation, all interviews are positive scene safety is key for the safety operation/demolition.

Troopers- Nothing at this point waiting to deploy if needed.

Wind-Good news light winds shifting away from Casselton later this afternoon helping relief efforts.

Casselton Fire- Waiting on CTEH to a give update.

Fargo Cass public health will be here shortly to assist with PIO efforts. Holly Scott and Robyn Lytke will be here.

County Admin-Nothing new

Border Patrol called to offer any help, they offered to bring in an unmanned aircraft if needed.

BNSF 8-9 grain cars have been moved north of the tracks. 6-7 left to go.

8am they will begin moving the tank cars 2-3 are still on fire so FYI the fire/smoke will increase with the introduction of more air into the tank cars.

CTEH- Spent the night driving through the community, working the area and found very little particulates in the air.

There was a higher presence of particulate matter earlier tonight those have gone down.

No major/hazard chemicals were found in the air during testing.

By 6pm tonight (12-31-13) BNSF figures they will have all train cars moved

NTSB will be here this morning to start their investigation.

Discussed the 0900 press conference

Casselton business will be closed until noon. Ed McConnell sent a notice out to all stores/businesses to stay closed until noon.

Meeting adjourned.

0730 Shift change for the Sheriff's office. Deputies beginning to arrive for briefing and shift change.

0800-3519 took over as the scribe for 3537.

**SCRIBE TRANSFERRED TO: DEPUTY CHRIS FIX**

0800- CCSO Morning briefing. CCSO night staff dismissed. Post assignments for day shift given

0815- Sheriff Laney and Captain Burris met with Kip Wills from USDOT regarding HazMat Safety

0825- Sheriff Laney and Captain Burris met with County Commissioner, Ken Pawluk regarding Emergency Response on this incident.

0900- Press conference in conference room at Central Cass HS conducted by Sheriff Laney and Sgt Morris.

Amy (BNSF) announced claims information. A Claims Center will be opened at the Days Inn in Casselton on Thursday, Jan 2 from 8a – 5p. [REDACTED]

Dr. Alan Nye from Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health described the air conditions as better than he expected. Air readings testing in the good range.

Also spoke: Tim Mclean (Casselton Fire Chief), Ed McConnell (Casselton Mayor), Ken Pawluk (Cass County Commission Chair) and Dr Baird (Fargo Cass Public Health)

Chairman Pawluk announced the YMCA would be available for evacuees to shower if needed.

1050- 3525 and 3519 spoke with Dave Rogness on demobilization regarding Central Cass School.

1100- Agency head meeting in Central Cass School office area.

Agencies represented:

CCSO

CCHD – Jason Benson

Casselton Fire

City of Casselton Mayor- McConnell

NDHP

Red Cross

FM Ambulance

Cass County Commission – Chairman Pawluk

Fargo Fire Department

Fargo Cass Public Health

ND Department of Public Health

1220- BNSF met with Sheriff Laney regarding NTSB's request for aerial photos of the scene before clean-up of the crash site.

1230- Sheriff Laney receives a call from ND EOC and Governor's Office.

1300- Agency head meeting. Discussions on how to proceed forward.

Sheriff Laney reported CBP was en-route from Grand Forks to take aerial photos of scene. CBP would then land at the Casselton Airport to drop off the photos to Deputy Van Den Einde to deliver to NTSB.

1330- Sheriff Laney provided media interview with KSTP Ch 5 out of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

1400- Agency head meeting to discuss lifting the voluntary evacuation order in Casselton.

Those present:

Sheriff Laney, Ken Pawluk, Chief Mclean, McConnell, Dr. Nye, Keith Berndt and Dr. Baird.

1410- Decision made to lift evacuation order in Casselton, effective 1500 hours on 12/31/13.

1435- News Release sent to list evacuation order

1436- Governor Dalrymple, Senator Hoeven and contingents arrived at Central Cass HS.

1445- Dignitaries (Governor Dalrymple, Senator Hoeven and contingents) met with BNSF and NTSB in the library at Central Cass HS.

1520- Dignitaries (Governor Dalrymple, Senator Hoeven and contingents) met with remaining agency representatives. Some of those present: Cass County SO, City Commission, County Manager, Cass County EM, NDHP, Fargo Cass Public Heather, ND Dept of Health, City of Casselton, Casselton Fire, and others.

1700- Cass County Tactical Operations Closed.

1730- Command Post closed.

