

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**  
Vehicle Recorder Division  
Washington, DC 20594

June 17, 2011

## **On-Board Image Factual Report**

**Specialist's Factual Report**  
**By Christopher Babcock**

### **1. EVENT**

Location: Red Oak, Iowa  
Date: April 17, 2011, 0700 Central Daylight Time (CDT)  
Operator: Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad  
NTSB Number: DCA11FR002

### **2. GROUP**

A group was not convened.

### **3. SUMMARY**

At approximately 0700 CDT on April 17, 2011, an eastbound BNSF coal train with 3 locomotives and 130 loaded hopper cars struck the rear of an eastbound BNSF track maintenance work train that had stopped for a red signal. As a result of the collision, the 2 crewmembers of the striking train were fatally injured.

The lead locomotive of the striking train was equipped with a fixed-mount, forward facing video camera. The hard drive unit was recovered and forwarded to the National Transportation Safety Board Vehicle Recorder Laboratory for analysis.

### **4. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION**

On April 20, 2011, the NTSB Vehicle Recorder Laboratory received the following recording device:

Recorder Manufacturer/Model: **Wabtec Traintrax Video Recorder**  
Recorder Serial Number: **unknown**

#### **4.1. Recorder Description**

The Wabtec Traintrax system is comprised of a fixed-mount, forward facing video camera and a control and data storage unit. The camera captures forward facing video and external audio and the control and data storage unit stores the video and audio data on an IDE hard drive located inside a removable caddy within the unit. No video or audio is captured inside the locomotive control compartment.

## 4.2. Damage Description

Upon arrival in the lab, the hard drive enclosure was found to be heavily fire damaged (Figures 1 & 2). The hard drive caddy (Figure 3) and hard drive itself (Figure 4) were extracted and found to have suffered heavy fire damage as well.



Figure 1. Fire damage to exterior of unit.

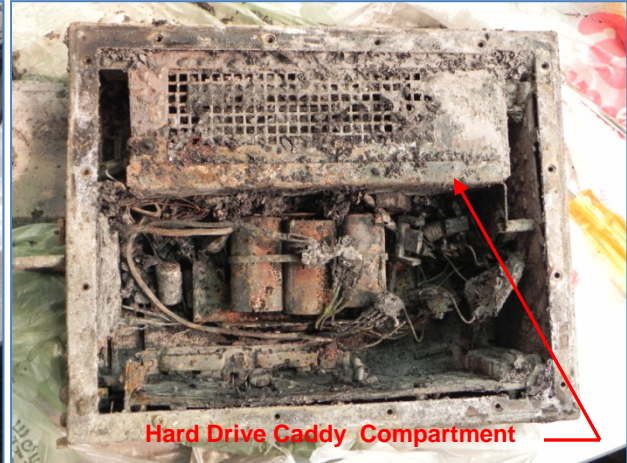


Figure 2. Interior of unit shown with side panel removed.



Figure 3. Hard drive caddy.

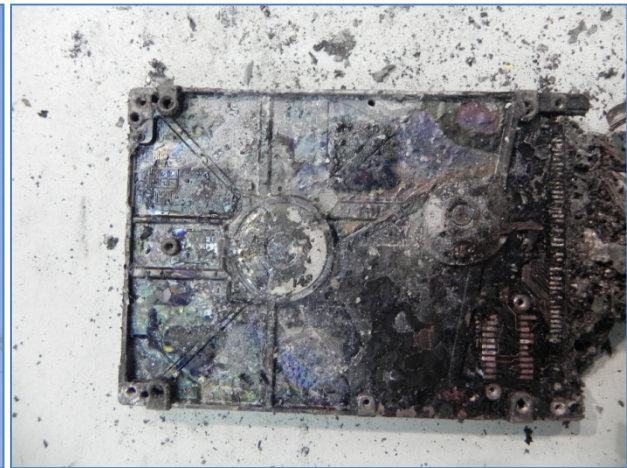


Figure 4. Damaged hard drive.

## 4.3. Recording Recovery

The hard drive was transported to an outside vendor specializing in hard drive data recovery. After examination and attempting to repair the damaged hard drive, the vendor reported the hard drive was damaged beyond repair and its contents were unrecoverable.

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