



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
**Investigative Hearing**

Norfolk Southern Railway general merchandise freight train 32N  
derailment with subsequent hazardous material release and fires,  
in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>EXHIBIT</b>	
18	

Agency / Organization

**Sandy Creek Joint Fire District**

Title

**Interview Transcript – Fire Chief**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT  
IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO  
ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023

Accident No.: RRD23MR005

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Interview of: AARON STOLLER, Fire Chief  
Sandy Creek Joint Fire District  
Minerva, Ohio

Via Microsoft Teams

Monday,  
May 8, 2023

APPEARANCES:

RICHARD DOWNS, Survival Factors Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

TROY LLOYD, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

CYNDI LAKE, Chief, Occupational Safety and Health  
Division  
National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL CAREY, Chief (ret), Boston Fire Department  
On behalf of the International Association of Fire  
Fighters

KAI RIEGER, Deputy Chief  
Jackson Township Fire Department  
Representative for Mr. Stoller

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:10 a.m.)

MR. DOWNS: Good morning. Today's date is May 8th, 2023 and the time is 11:10 a.m. This interview, which is being implemented virtually utilizing Microsoft Teams, is being conducted by the investigative staff of the National Transportation Safety Board in connection with the Norfolk Southern Railway train derailment that occurred in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023. The NTSB accident number reference is RRD23MR005. This is an interview of Chief Aaron Stoller, who's affiliated with the Sandy Creek Joint Fire District.

Chief Stoller, thank you for joining us today and if you could kindly please state your name, please spell your last name, state your current job title for the record.

MR. STOLLER: Aaron Stoller, A-a-r-o-n S-t-o-l-l-e-r. Current job title, fire chief of the Sandy Creek Fire District in Minerva, Ohio.

MR. DOWNS: Thank you for joining us today and you understand that this interview is being recorded?

MR. STOLLER: I do.

MR. DOWNS: Thank you. Now, before we start this interview, I'd like to advise the interview participants that the NTSB interview procedures under 49 C.F.R. 831.7 affords persons being interviewed the opportunity to be accompanied by one representative of their choosing, in which that participating

1 representative can be anyone, or the interviewee can elect not to  
2 have no representative to be present. So Chief Stoller, I'll ask,  
3 have you elected to have a representative accompany you in this  
4 interview?

5 MR. STOLLER: I have.

6 MR. DOWNS: Thank you.

7 MR. STOLLER: And his name is Deputy Chief Kai Rieger, K-a-i  
8 R-i-e-g-e-r, of the Jackson Township Fire Department in Stark  
9 County.

10 MR. DOWNS: Very good. Thank you. Now, the purpose of this  
11 investigation is to improve safety and not to assign fault, blame,  
12 or liability. The sole mission of the NTSB is to improve  
13 transportation safety and prevent accidents and as such, the NTSB  
14 cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from any  
15 legal proceeding by any other agency, whether it's local, state,  
16 or federal.

17 Also, I just wanted to note to all the participants here, a  
18 transcript of this interview will be compiled and placed in the  
19 public docket for this investigation, which will be available  
20 through the NTSB website, that being [www.nts.gov](http://www.nts.gov).

21 Now, with the above admin items covered, let us go around the  
22 virtual room here and introduce ourselves. I ask that you please  
23 state your name and spell your last name, what entity or company  
24 that you are representing or affiliated with, and your employment  
25 title. I would also like to remind everybody to please speak

1 clearly for the recording and transcription. Now, as we've  
2 already identified the interviewee, I'll start off with myself,  
3 and then we'll go around the virtual room here. My name is  
4 Richard Downs, Jr. Spelling of my last name is D-o-w-n-s. I am  
5 an investigator with the NTSB out of Washington, D.C. My  
6 specialty is survival factors investigations.

7 If we could identify, please, Chief Stoller, your  
8 participating representative, please.

9 MR. STOLLER: Deputy Chief Kai Rieger with Jackson --

10 MR. DOWNS: We need Mr. Rieger to identify himself.

11 MR. STOLLER: Oh, sorry.

12 MR. RIEGER: Sorry. I'm Deputy Chief Kai Rieger, Jackson  
13 Township Fire Department, and also a hazmat team leader with Stark  
14 County hazmat team, that responded to that incident.

15 MR. DOWNS: Thank you, sir.

16 And who else do we have next? Mr. Lloyd.

17 MR. LLOYD: Hey, good morning, Chief. My name is Troy Lloyd,  
18 I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board, I'm a railroad  
19 accident investigator. Spelling of my last name is L-l-o-y-d.

20 MS. LAKE: And I'm Cyndi Lake, last name is L-a-k-e, and I  
21 work in our safety division at the NTSB.

22 MR. DOWNS: And who else do we have? I see here somebody  
23 else has joined us. It's just showing a telephone number.

24 MR. CAREY: Paul Carey.

25 MR. DOWNS: Is that you, Chief Carey?

1 MR. CAREY: Yeah, can you hear me?

2 MR. DOWNS: I can hear you but can't see you. By telephone  
3 is -- by phone is fine if that's all you have today.

4 MR. CAREY: Yeah, all I have is a phone. My name is  
5 Paul Carey, I'm a retired Boston Fire Department district chief  
6 and hazmat ops chief. I'm here on behalf of the IAFF.

7 MR. DOWNS: Thank you, Chief Carey. Yes, let me mention  
8 Chief Carey is joining our panel here as a subject matter expert.  
9 He'll be asking some of the questions as we proceed through the  
10 interview. Okay, thank you to all.

11 Chief Stoller, we welcome your responses in your own words,  
12 please. And if any questions are unclear or if you don't  
13 understand any question, please don't hesitate to ask the  
14 questioner to clarify or restate the question. And if you don't  
15 know the answer to any question, of course, it's fully permitted  
16 to indicate that you don't know. We don't want you to speculate.

17 INTERVIEW OF AARON STOLLER

18 BY MR. DOWNS:

19 Q. Okay, Chief, my initial questions to you are background, as  
20 follows. Chief Stoller, can you please tell us about your  
21 background, your education, and your expertise?

22 A. My background is, is I joined the fire service at the age of  
23 18 after graduating high school. I went on to obtain my Fire  
24 Level 2 card in the state of Ohio. Firefighter, paramedic permit  
25 card in Ohio. I'm also a fire safety inspector, my full-time



1 employment. I'm also a fire scene investigator. I've taken the  
2 Maxwell Program on leadership, have various other college courses  
3 in my background, plus have NIMS 100, 200 and 300 and 400 and 700  
4 and 800 Fire Officer 1 and 2 in the state of Ohio. And my  
5 background is predominantly in suppression and fire investigation  
6 and management.

7 Q. Very good, thank you. My next question was going to be what  
8 positions have you had, but you've addressed those nicely. How  
9 long in your current position as chief?

10 A. My current position of chief is on my 14th year.

11 Q. Fourteen, okay. And as chief, can you give us a brief  
12 synopsis of your duties?

13 A. My duties include all management and then the overseeing of  
14 fire suppression, fire education and investigation, at my main --  
15 at my part-time employment. My full-time employment, I'm a plans  
16 and -- a plans developer and plans examiner.

17 Q. Very good. And who do you report to?

18 A. At my part-time job, Sandy Creek, I report to a fire board  
19 and a board chairman, and at my full-time job as a fire inspector,  
20 I report to my deputy chief.

21 Q. So as chief of the department, who do you report to now?

22 A. We have a fire board, a government agency.

23 Q. Fire board.

24 A. Yeah. And board chairman.

25 Q. Very good. And that's considered a full-time paid or

1 voluntary position?

2 A. It's a part-time paid position.

3 MR. DOWNS: Part-time paid, great. Okay. Thank you. And  
4 with the introductory questions completed, we'll proceed around  
5 the room here with participant questions and we'll start first  
6 with Mr. Lloyd.

7 BY MR. LLOYD:

8 Q. Hey, good morning, Chief Stoller. How are you doing?

9 A. Great. How are you, sir?

10 Q. Yeah, good. I think, when did we talk, Thursday or Friday, I  
11 guess, right?

12 A. Thursday, yes.

13 Q. Yeah. So again, this is Troy Lloyd with the NTSB. Spelling  
14 of my last name is L-l-o-y-d. And just like me, you started in  
15 the fire service a little bit early, so tell us how you got your  
16 start and how did you work your way up to chief and what does it  
17 take to be a chief at your volunteer department, but then what  
18 does it take to be a chief such as at the career department that  
19 you're at, what's the difference between the two?

20 A. I got started at an early age. I had both a grandfather and  
21 a great uncle, both -- that left the volunteer service with 42 and  
22 36 years, respectively, so I grew up there as a kid at the fire  
23 station. It's always something I wanted to do. I'm a cancer  
24 survivor from the age of eight and the community stood behind me  
25 and donated a lot to me and my family, so it was a way to give

1 back to the community. Joined the ranks at -- on a roster of  
2 about 35 at the local volunteer service when I started, worked my  
3 way up to lieutenant after about 5 years, captain not too long  
4 after that, and then was captain for about 2 years and the chief  
5 at that time retired, he was leaving the volunteer service with 50  
6 years under his belt and about four of us applied for the position  
7 of fire chief, I was selected.

8 I had a vision to change the fire department from a volunteer  
9 service that didn't do EMS, and taking on EMS and changing into a  
10 fire district, which I accomplished in about 2 years after taking  
11 over as chief. That was a lot of headaches, but I worked my way  
12 up and made sure -- as a fire chief, I wanted to make sure I had  
13 education behind me and a group of friends who you could talk to  
14 and bounce ideas off of, so my circle of trust friends, as a fire  
15 chief, are very instrumental.

16 In Ohio, we don't have a lot of standards, unfortunately, to  
17 be a fire chief, pretty much a clean background check, a fire card  
18 get you in the door as a fire chief and after that, it's up to you  
19 to do that. There are some things that are out there from the  
20 Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, there's a credentialing program for  
21 Ohio fire chiefs and Ohio fire officials that are trying to change  
22 the standard, or the lack of, to be a fire chief in the state of  
23 Ohio, but that has had a slow process of getting some legs amongst  
24 the volunteer chiefs. The difference between that and a full-time  
25 fire chief is most of our full-time chiefs have some type of a

1 master's or a bachelor's degree and just a difference in  
2 overseeing a number of employees. My full-time department where I  
3 work as a fire prevention officer has 70, right, 70 full-time  
4 staff, and then as a volunteer chief, I have 27, combination, I  
5 have about 12 full-time and the rest are part-time/volunteer  
6 (indiscernible).

7 Q. Thank you for that. So others we've interviewed, other fire  
8 chiefs and other credentialed chiefs in the Ohio area talked about  
9 some type of 36-hour training for a fire chief, so what is that?  
10 So is that -- explain to me what the 36-hour fire training is, is  
11 that's all that's needed to be a volunteer fire chief responding  
12 out of ABC Fire Department?

13 A. Yes. In the state of Ohio, that class consists of three  
14 weekends, 6 hours every Saturday and Sunday, and then at the end  
15 it gets those checked off on the basic necessities, that includes  
16 no live fire training, it includes no EVOC training and yeah, I  
17 think it's a world of disservice to what we expect as fire  
18 officials. This is a personal opinion, but I believe that that  
19 class needs to be taken away.

20 And I believe, having talked with other fire chiefs in the  
21 Northeast, they don't accept that, they do the Firefighter 1 and  
22 the Firefighter 2, which are a hundred and 20 hours apiece. So  
23 I'm a believer that the 36-hour class in Ohio needs to go away.  
24 But unfortunately, there's a lot of pull with the political folks  
25 that keep it in play just because of they're afraid that, you know

1 -- well, it's no secret, right, volunteers are hard to come by.  
2 If you put more hour requirements on them, it's going to be harder  
3 for them to get people to sign up.

4 Q. Yeah, but you got to have the credentials to make the life  
5 and property decisions, so --

6 A. A hundred percent --

7 Q. What's that again?

8 A. A hundred percent, I agree with that.

9 Q. Oh, yeah.

10 A. I mean, up until 2009, you did not have any continuing  
11 education requirements. You could get your card and be a lifer  
12 and never have any CE. In 2009, the state of Ohio finally  
13 corrected that. They made it 54 hours in a 3-year cycle, you had  
14 to have CE and just recently, the legislature in the state of Ohio  
15 reduced that to 36 hours every 3 years, so they have 12 hours a  
16 year, which I don't think is enough, either.

17 Q. Right. So on top of that, that 36-hour credentialing class,  
18 how does that correspond with the OSHA-required hazardous  
19 materials awareness/hazardous materials operations type of "I can  
20 only go so close, I can either be in the cold zone, the hot zone,  
21 warm zone," whatever, how does that correlate, is that 36 hours,  
22 is that -- is that other classes they have to take on top of the  
23 36 or they don't need the hazmat awareness or the hazmat ops or  
24 anything like that?

25 MR. STOLLER: Just one second. That's not a reg, there's

1 nothing in it.

2 MR. RIEGER: Nothing in the 36 long-term firefighter course  
3 and that encompasses hazmat.

4 MR. STOLLER: There's nothing in that 36-hour course that  
5 encompasses hazmat, that would be additional training. You have  
6 responsibility of your host department to hit the awareness level  
7 first and then the operations level, if they so chose to do so.

8 BY MR. LLOYD:

9 Q. Okay. And is that required at each and every fire department  
10 in Ohio for a fire chief or even the minimal firefighter riding  
11 the back step or the jump seat, to have the minimal OSHA-required  
12 hazmat awareness or hazmat ops training so we can do decon and  
13 things of that nature?

14 A. Don't believe it's a requirement, it's recommended. Many  
15 departments do it, but I don't know that it's a requirement.

16 Q. Even though we know it's an OSHA reg, they don't -- it's --  
17 it could be just something they can take if they want, right?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Okay. What about the presidential required NIMS classes to  
20 take command of a situation such as 700, 800, 100, like yourself,  
21 like me, 300 and 400 with the unified, the area command, where's  
22 that volunteer chief stop at in his required NIMS training?

23 A. In the 36-hour class, I believe all they're required to  
24 submit is their 700, 100, 200 classes, show that they have  
25 completed those online by completion of course.

1 Q. Yeah, so they get -- they'll get that certificate from the --  
2 from the NFA showing that --

3 A. Right.

4 Q. -- they've completed the online ICS course?

5 A. To excel from that on up to the rest of the courses, there's  
6 nothing in Ohio short of your FEMA grant requirements to keep  
7 building on that background.

8 Q. So your response to the East Palestine incident was with your  
9 volunteer fire department, you responded as one of the chiefs or  
10 -- correct?

11 A. Correct. Correct, and they called for an incident management  
12 team, yes.

13 Q. Got you. So what's the traveling distance between, you know,  
14 you're going to get in your buggy and you're going to roll into  
15 East Palestine, how many -- what's the traveling distance?

16 A. About a 30-minute drive.

17 Q. A good 30-minute drive, that's a ways.

18 A. Correct, yes.

19 Q. So when you get there, talk to me about when you get there,  
20 your first impressions, was there a pretty much functional  
21 incident command established where they had one incident commander  
22 and, you know, everybody working together in unison, talk to me  
23 about that, the interoperability with the radios, all that stuff.  
24 And then what was your assignment? So everything from the  
25 beginning, when you got there, talk to me about your impressions

1 and everything.

2 A. So we walked into the fire station/police department, it was  
3 a joint venture building, I walked in the front door. We'll call  
4 it, it looked like it was controlled chaos when you first walked  
5 in the door. The food line where the command post and people that  
6 were representing the railroad and the private contractors were  
7 utilizing, there was a table set up for Norfolk Southern, there  
8 was a table set up for fire command, there was an area set up for  
9 the EPA, both Ohio and national EPA were sharing the same table.

10 In the back corner was the police department and then off on  
11 the side rooms of the building was the local -- the contractors of  
12 choice that were working for the railroad to help mitigate the  
13 problem. We walked in, made first contact with the incident  
14 commander, it was not a friendly welcome.

15 However, we went into this back detective's office and met  
16 with some other fire chiefs that had come in. They had got there  
17 probably about 20 minutes before we did, they had all the NIMS  
18 forms on a flash drive, so they acquired a computer and started to  
19 fill out those necessary forms to get a more organized situation  
20 going.

21 In the back of the room they had a TV that was back there  
22 that we believe, at that point, were playing videos and had the --  
23 their ICS, who was in charge of what -- up there for parts of the  
24 day. So we went back there and had a meeting amongst us, there  
25 were 10 chiefs that went, five from Stark County and five from



1 Trumbull County that were there and then we were there to fill  
2 until the Butler County incident management assist team arrived,  
3 if you ever meet those guys, those guys are like top-notch, I  
4 think they're about ready to be typed through nationally, they  
5 have their own camper and their own (indiscernible). We were  
6 there to fill for them. Obviously, to drive from the Cincinnati  
7 area to that area was going to be a 6-hour drive for them.

8 So we eventually got our game plan, we brought the chief back  
9 to us, Chief Drabick, back to us, had another conversation and my  
10 first -- my first question TO Chief Drabick was I hope your plan  
11 is not to run this event from start to finish without ever going  
12 home and he answered that was not his intent, his intent was to  
13 have work periods, which is what we were there to try to help them  
14 do. So we sat down, kind of explained better how we're there to  
15 help him. We asked them, you know, those guys were tired, there's  
16 no lie there, I mean, one of his guys at the command table is --  
17 I'm not sure what his rank is at the department, but he also  
18 happens to be the assistant EMA director for the county.

19 So I've known Mr. Rutledge for a long time and so we had some  
20 interaction there. He told me at 7 o'clock he would go outside  
21 and he would yell, the room would become silent and we would have  
22 a briefing of what was going on for the day. You could tell he  
23 was very frustrated with the information that he been provided or  
24 allowed to share from the railroad to the general public, that was  
25 very obvious in his press conference and interaction with us,

1 those conversations, but at 7 o'clock we're going to have a press  
2 conference -- not a press conference, a briefing of the situation  
3 from everybody that was involved and after that, they were going  
4 to develop the next game plan for the evening because at that  
5 point in time, that time it was already dark, so what we're going  
6 to be able to do overnight.

7 I was kind of -- I wanted to watch this happen because when I  
8 walked to the room, like I told you, it was controlled chaos, but  
9 he did, he walked in, he yelled, said it's 7 o'clock, doing the  
10 briefing, he went around the room, each person talked, who they  
11 were, where they were at, what they were doing, what they wanted  
12 to do next. At that point in time, it was developed that they  
13 were going to do a rest period or wait until daylight period,  
14 however you want to say that, to do the next steps. And so my  
15 conversation was "Chief, when you send your guys home, leave us  
16 one person from your team that can incident command and the rest  
17 of us can help facilitate that."

18 And one of the other guys that was with us was the Region 5  
19 coordinator for the incident or for the chief's response plan, so  
20 he facilitated all this, he gave us all our positions to be in the  
21 overnight, and they left their deputy chief who probably wasn't  
22 the best guy to leave behind because he had been there since the  
23 incident started, so he was very tired and had fallen asleep a  
24 couple times in the chair while we were trying to get ourselves  
25 set up. I was given the PIO job, public information officer, for

1 the overnight and to help with any services they were to provide.  
2 So besides the EMA -- since the EMA director was there and their  
3 deputy chief, who they had put in charge for the overnight, all  
4 the other tasks were accomplished by the chiefs that had come  
5 forward. They were doing everything by cell phone, there were  
6 four or five cell phones laying on the incident command table and  
7 that's how they were communicating. There was no communications  
8 of radio waves that could be done between the EPAs, Norfolk  
9 Southern, and the fire department that wasn't going to be via  
10 cellular technology.

11 In Ohio, we have a multi-agency rating called the Ohio MARCS  
12 System, it's a very great and robust system. We had called for  
13 what's called a TOW, which is a tower on wheels, to be brought up  
14 to the incident command area, to be set up by the MARCS folks,  
15 which when they bring that up, it opens up like 16 talk groups  
16 that are just local talk groups, it can only be used in like a 3-  
17 mile radius of the tower, and the state brought 75 portable MARCS  
18 radios to be utilized.

19 When that arrived sometime around 10, 11 o'clock at night,  
20 with that rest period, it was set up to be ready for 6 o'clock in  
21 the morning to divvy out those radios. They do have a MARCS tower  
22 in East Palestine, but it only has five talk paths available on  
23 it. And Columbiana County is very anti-MARCS system because you  
24 lose control of your radio system and it's run by the state. In  
25 the county where I live at, we switched about 3 years ago to the

1 MARCS system, it's probably been the best thing we've ever done as  
2 far as interoperability. Once it was set up and utilized, it  
3 became a great system to utilize. We stayed until about midnight,  
4 1 o'clock in the morning. Once the guys from Butler County got  
5 set up and moving, with that rest period, there was no need for us  
6 to have a full-fledged operating command post with six, seven  
7 chiefs sitting there when there was just a rest period until, you  
8 know, 6 o'clock in the morning, and so we were relieved to go home  
9 and let the rest of that stuff get set up.

10 Q. So your timeline of events, accident happens on a Friday  
11 night, I believe I got up there Saturday morning, let's say 9  
12 o'clock, you were more into the Saturday evening/Saturday night  
13 planning phase function --

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. -- of the accident?

16 A. Yeah, I was contacted Friday night by a neighboring fire  
17 department to let me know that I was the only fire department that  
18 responds in Columbiana County that was still whole, meaning we  
19 didn't have any resources going to the incident, so it made my  
20 decision as a fire chief pretty easy, we weren't going, right, if  
21 we weren't there, we weren't going. I talked to other fire chiefs  
22 on the weekend who had been there and ended up on the wrong side  
23 of the track, so to speak, where there wasn't much or there wasn't  
24 any command or control on the north side of the tracks.

25 Q. So you're good, so you're probably within at least 18 or 24

1 hours into the event before your arrival, correct?

2 A. Correct, yeah.

3 Q. Okay. And they already -- they already moved from the  
4 initial incident command post to the fire/police building where  
5 they -- where they had some type of established, unified --  
6 unified command, correct?

7 A. That is correct. But they already had a period of being not  
8 a good working relationship with the railroad, there had been some  
9 major tension there. One of the chiefs that was with us sat down  
10 and talked to the gentleman from the railroad and we had a good  
11 relationship with him.

12 By the time we left, they were sharing with us pictures from  
13 their own hazmat team where they'd been on the train cars earlier  
14 that day, they had up-close personal pictures I was shocked to  
15 see. But we had (indiscernible) relationship with them on the  
16 railroad, that we were getting more information than we believe  
17 that had been shared before us.

18 Q. You would know what would bring those tensions on because,  
19 you know, a good functional unified command, you got to have that  
20 and this guy sitting at the table --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- getting rid of the cell phone, talk to this guy, have him  
23 -- I mean, we all have portable radios that we can listen to, you  
24 know, one another talk and that's a functional, unified command  
25 system, I mean, but what do you think would've brought those

1 tensions on, it was -- do you think it was the unknowns about what  
2 was happening or --

3 A. A lot of it was the unknown, right, the -- I mean, I'm an  
4 AskRail app user, but the getting through the initial setup,  
5 getting approved to be on it, getting information from that app,  
6 trust me, after this -- because when they close these rails,  
7 right, they sent most of the train traffic through my  
8 jurisdiction. So did I have a better understanding of how the  
9 AskRail app works, I did, more so than I did to that point. I  
10 think it was that and then the -- somebody always told me, right,  
11 you got to tell it first, tell the truth and tell it all. If you  
12 don't do that, you lose that ability, right?

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. You made a point, because somebody here in my office had  
15 shared that with me once, right, that they got behind that eight  
16 ball, and unfortunately, when it comes down to this event, right,  
17 as a fire chief has to deal with local media from your date of  
18 start to your date of retirement, the rail folks are going to deal  
19 with them people while they're in East Palestine. After that,  
20 they leave them and they don't have to deal with local media, but  
21 we, as fire chiefs, get eaten up by the local media if you're not  
22 friendly with them. You can't tell them everything, but sometimes  
23 they expect more because they're local -- they're your community,  
24 who's -- they're looking out for everybody.

25 Q. We deal with the same thing, there's some things you got to

1 -- yeah, until all the facts come out, correct?

2 A. Yes. And I think some of that was just the timeliness of  
3 them coming out. I mean, I'm not armchair quarterbacking, but if  
4 it's available on the AskRail app, you know what the worst -- when  
5 somebody asks you what's the worst chemical to be on this train,  
6 this is it, right? This is what's listed on the manifest, I don't  
7 know what rail cars are involved, but what's the worst they could  
8 have on the train, it's X or it's Y, you know, it is what it is.  
9 But if we're not giving information out early on, when it does  
10 come out hours later, we're looking like we were the ones sitting  
11 behind and not sharing information.

12 Q. All right.

13 A. As fire chief, you're the one going out and talking to the  
14 public.

15 Q. Right. So when you got there, 18, 24 hours, you know, after  
16 -- post-accident, what on-scene actions were taking place? Was  
17 everybody sort of pretty much moved away, the firemen were moved  
18 away, they wasn't even really doing any exposure protections  
19 anymore, I mean, so what was -- were they just allowing it to burn  
20 at that point or --

21 A. They were. Everybody had went back home, they were back to  
22 just staffing their station with some mutual aid companies while  
23 their firemen were supposed to be resting and so that problem had  
24 taken place. There was still a lot of supplies left in place,  
25 like dump tanks and fire hoses and nozzles, there was someone's

1 fire truck at that point in time that was stuck in place in mud,  
2 hadn't pulled it out yet, but all the ancillary stuff was -- had  
3 returned home to their home base.

4 Q. Now, the evacuation was already, I guess, in place the time  
5 you got there, you and your IMT took over or --

6 A. Yes, it was voluntary. I mean looking back, I believe that  
7 they would have made that differently; as an investigator, I would  
8 have. If it's recommended, you got to clear it, I mean, not  
9 knowing at that point early on what was in the cars, what was  
10 actively involved in the fire, you've got to clear those houses to  
11 keep your community safe.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. And unfortunately, when they did that, they picked a fire  
14 station that was still in the evacuation zone, so we were inside  
15 that half mile and obviously, by Monday or Sunday, they moved that  
16 to a school, which is --

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. -- a better place to go.

19 Q. Yeah, yeah. So once you got everything set, you got -- you  
20 pretty much set them on a 12-hour planning P (ph.) and then  
21 usually the situation starts to come together, you get that 12-  
22 hour advance notice what's going to take place 12 hours later,  
23 they come in to the briefing, all that stuff was -- once you guys  
24 left out of there, that was pretty much --

25 A. Yeah.



1 Q. -- a roll-in effect into play, correct?

2 A. Yeah, once Butler County got out there and got themselves set  
3 up, that changed the whole demographic of how this thing played  
4 out to the future from everything, the knowledge I know from the  
5 people that were there past me, after me, I guess I should say,  
6 that whole -- that changed the whole dynamic of the event, I  
7 think, tenfold.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. To a better situation.

10 MR. LLOYD: Yeah, I got you. Chief, that's all I have right  
11 now, I'm sure that there's going to be another go-around, I'll  
12 probably fetch on some little after-action questions or something,  
13 but thank you, both.

14 MR. STOLLER: Thank you.

15 MR. KIEGER: Thank you.

16 MR. DOWNS: Okay, thank you, Mr. Lloyd.

17 Ms. Lake or Chief Carey, whoever wants to go next.

18 BY MS. LAKE:

19 Q. Yeah, this is Cyndi. I just had one question. Do you have  
20 the documents that you all created as part of your IAP for the  
21 time that you were there?

22 A. Yes. Not in front of me, but yes, I do have the -- I have  
23 access to them.

24 Q. Is that something that you could share with us?

25 A. Yes. Once I locate them, I will definitely send them.

1 Q. Yeah. That would be great. And so when, around what time,  
2 then, did you all arrive? I know we -- like we had said, don't  
3 worry about specific times, but just a guesstimate because it was  
4 Saturday, correct?

5 A. It was Saturday and we were --

6 Q. Like in the evening?

7 A. -- there for the 7:00 p.m. briefing.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So I believe the original call through the Ohio fire chiefs  
10 response plan went out about 4:30-ish, and it was a scramble,  
11 which means you have to be on the road in 30 minutes.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 A. We were there probably 6 o'clock, so we were there for  
14 probably close to an hour before the actual briefing was.

15 Q. Okay. And the requests for the IMT, that came from Chief  
16 Drabick, is that correct?

17 A. Yeah. I'm not sure who originally submitted it from their  
18 department, but the actual request comes from Chief Drabick to the  
19 Ohio fire chiefs emergency response plan.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And you put your request of what you're looking for.

22 Q. Okay, great.

23 A. And that was the first time that it had been utilized in the  
24 event. They did not utilize it on Friday night for a response,  
25 the initial response, it wasn't started being utilized until

1 Saturday night with first request for the incident management  
2 assist team, the Butler County IMAT, and then it was utilized  
3 after that for their resources.

4 Q. Okay. What other events has the IMT been activated for in  
5 the past?

6 A. The Stark County IMAT team goes with any full hazmat  
7 deployment --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- to, I think, water rescue events through other counties.  
10 We use a modified IMAT assignment for balloon stuff, for the pro  
11 football hall of fame events that are in the county.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Provide incident management assist team, they use with that  
14 for a week in August.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They're always in town with that.

17 MS. LAKE: Okay, great. Thank you, that's all I have.

18 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Chief Carey, are you still with us?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. DOWNS: Chief Carey? Hello, Carey, you're muted.

21 MS. LAKE: Yeah, try un-muting.

22 MR. DOWNS: Okay, he may not be able to hear us, so I'll  
23 proceed with my questions rather than delay.

24 BY MR. DOWNS:

25 Q. Chief Stoller, thanks again for joining us, we've already

1 addressed approximately the time that you arrived on scene, which  
2 is a little bit before 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, is that correct?

3 A. That would be correct, yeah.

4 Q. Great. And that was not quite 24 hours into the event. And  
5 you characterized it as it was kind of a controlled chaos when you  
6 arrived at the combo of bases, police and fire department command  
7 site?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. And this is even 24 hours into the event, it was still a  
10 confusion type of environment?

11 A. Confusion, loud event. Everybody knew where their table was,  
12 a hundred percent, but if you're looking to have a conversation,  
13 it wasn't -- unless you were 3 foot away from each other, it  
14 wasn't just -- it wasn't like an atmosphere I would think of in  
15 that situation, no.

16 Q. So in your decades of experience and involvement with  
17 incident command, normally, is an incident command best set up in  
18 an environment where you can keep control of the situation, have a  
19 level of quietness, things of that sort, and have enough space so  
20 that everybody has room to work, would that be a fair  
21 characterization?

22 A. That would be fair, yes.

23 Q. Very good. And when you arrived at the open base incident  
24 command, did you ever make it back to the original incident  
25 command site at the Leake gas station?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay, great. Who dispatched you to the scene? You  
3 indicated, I think, you were contacted by a neighboring fire  
4 department, was that correct?

5 A. Correct. I was contacted by our county coordinator, Chief  
6 Tim Berczik, who coordinates all the resources for our county when  
7 they put the request out for the five fire chiefs from -- between  
8 us and the neighboring county.

9 Q. Okay. And what county is Sandy Creek in?

10 A. It sits in Stark County.

11 Q. Stark County?

12 A. Yeah, S-t-a-r-k, yes.

13 Q. Stark County. And you're a half hour or so to the northwest,  
14 is it, of the East Palestine?

15 A. That would be to the southwest of East Palestine.

16 Q. Southwest, okay, great. Is there a Norfolk Southern rail  
17 line that runs through your jurisdiction?

18 A. There is.

19 Q. It's a freight line?

20 A. It's a freight line, correct.

21 Q. Freight line. Has Norfolk Southern offered any kind of  
22 emergency response training with your fire company?

23 A. Prior to the event, no.

24 Q. Oh, okay. So that suggests maybe subsequent to the event  
25 would be that answer.

1 A. So they have reached out to every county I think they have  
2 rail in and have offered us to go to their facility in -- in Ohio  
3 here, I think it's up around northwest Ohio to a rail yard they  
4 have, they brought their safety training to, and offered it over,  
5 I think, a 2-week period, different days, but you had to travel to  
6 that event.

7 Q. I see. So subsequent, they did offer. Was that recently or  
8 right after the accident, roughly?

9 A. I believe it was March into April, so yeah, a month or so  
10 after the event.

11 Q. About a month or so, okay. And the challenge there, it  
12 sounds like because it's such a distance to that training site at  
13 the Norfolk Southern rail yard, that would be kind of a challenge  
14 for your fire company to attend?

15 A. Yes. Not only that, but just the class times being a lot of  
16 them during the day, which would make it very difficult for people  
17 who have full-time employment jobs to attend.

18 Q. Has the NS provided any documented guidance as to be able to  
19 respond to an accident like this, any kind of hazmat manuals or  
20 anything like that?

21 A. No.

22 MR. DOWNS: No. Okay, very good. All right, that answers my  
23 questions at the moment. Do we have -- do we have -- I don't see  
24 Chief Carey still on the list here, so he may have dropped off,  
25 unfortunately. So we'll make one more go-around here.

1           Troy, do you have any further follow-up questions?

2           MR. LLOYD:  Yeah, I do.

3           BY MR. LLOYD:

4   Q.    So Chief Stoller, so NS and Amtrak, I guess, has a line that  
5 runs through your first-through area?

6   A.    Not Amtrak, that I'm aware of, just the Norfolk Southern and  
7 then we have a small private line that marshals cars from the  
8 village whenever we set it out to the Norfolk Southern pickup  
9 line.  It used to be Ohio Rail, now I think it's Tennessee  
10 something that we have locally, but we have different providers in  
11 our jurisdictional response area.  The only difference in the  
12 Norfolk Southern line versus East Palestine, that I'm aware of, is  
13 they can only do single stacks on our rail lines due to some  
14 bridge issues on our line.  So they're going to end up in the same  
15 location, but they can double stack on the East Palestine line but  
16 they cannot double stack on ours.

17           MR. LLOYD:  Got you.  Downs, you have something?

18           BY MR. DOWNS:

19   Q.    I was just going to ask, Chief, have you ever had an event on  
20 your particular rail line that even comes close to the East  
21 Palestine encounter?

22   A.    No, my only event has been I've had two accidents where cars  
23 hit trains and we had a fire at a fertilizer plant that was within  
24 15 feet of the rail line and we shut train traffic down.  But I've  
25 never had an event like this.  We had a couple fires along the

1 rails, when they were cleaning the rails, so to speak, but nothing  
2 this magnitude. But once we found out, even today our rail  
3 traffic is still up because of one line being down in East  
4 Palestine. So we've definitely brushed up on our response skills  
5 and our concern is we, as locally, is some of the legislation gets  
6 pushed through on what a hazardous train is and where it's allowed  
7 to travel, that we may see more product than we've seen in the  
8 past come our direction just due to the sparser population.

9 Where it runs through my jurisdiction there's a lot of farm  
10 community, not a lot of residential development, so I see the -- a  
11 lot of times the perceived risk is less, but if we're damaging  
12 farm fields which provides the crops for all of us to eat, I think  
13 it levels out of its own, at some magnitude on those levels.

14 MR. DOWNS: Very good. That sums up my question.

15 MS. LAKE, anything further, follow up for you?

16 MR. LLOYD: Yeah, I just got one more.

17 MR. DOWNS: Oh, Troy.

18 MS. LAKE: Go for it.

19 MR. DOWNS: Sorry, Troy.

20 BY MR. LLOYD:

21 Q. So Chief, after seeing this -- and I'll ask you both because  
22 you may be put into the situation. And I --

23 MR. DOWNS: Wait, wait. Hold on there, Troy. We cannot get  
24 testimony from our company guy.

25 MR. LLOYD: Well, we'll hear him later, then, but I want to



1 get his response, as well.

2 MR. DOWNS: Yeah, he can whisper an answer to our chief  
3 here --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 MR. LLOYD: I know the rules.

6 MR. DOWNS: Yes.

7 MR. LLOYD: I know the rules.

8 MR. STOLLER: Go ahead, sir.

9 BY MR. LLOYD:

10 Q. So hopefully, you don't ever see this happen ever again in  
11 your area, you know, but the lessons learned that you've taken out  
12 of this big incident, I mean, how do you prepare besides trusting  
13 in your incident command, knowing how to expand it, working with  
14 the subject matter experts, how do you -- how are you going to  
15 talk to your people, how do you prepare your fire department if  
16 they would ever have to go up against a task like East Palestine  
17 did?

18 A. So the conversations we've had at my home department are --  
19 it would be a lot different. When a hazmat team deploys in our  
20 county, the incident management team already gets deployed, which  
21 already opens the EMA and the EOC. So some of the things that  
22 didn't happen quickly in this incident would happen a lot faster  
23 in the jurisdiction that I protect. And in those situations, with  
24 the Stark County incident management assist team, they travel, the  
25 hazmat team travels, and the hazmat team travels to a lot of

1 adjacent counties because Stark County is really one of the  
2 nearest places that's a Type 2 type team, a Type 2 team for  
3 hazmat, so when they travel, they get the assist to go with them.  
4 We've been able to expand that incident management assist team as  
5 needed by the unified command. I believe when you have those  
6 briefings, there has to be parameters of what you expect to be  
7 brought back to the table at the next operational work period.

8       So if you sign a task out to put the pumps in the creek by 8  
9 o'clock, they better be there by 8:00 or there's another -- you  
10 know, there's another -- there's more things that come with it, or  
11 if we needed more information from the railroad, I need that  
12 manifest in a PDF form, e-mail to this address, and hopefully  
13 those kind of things will come out of this, is that we have  
14 faster, better access to what's being carried on the train, even  
15 if we don't know what cars are involved, you know, but if we  
16 unhook cars 50 back to 200 and get cars 1 through 10 moved, I want  
17 to look at a shorter manifest, I'm not looking at the whole thing.

18       The way I look at it, from my standpoint, is incident  
19 management assist team, faster; hazmat team, faster; rely on your  
20 subject matter experts to make these decisions and have those  
21 people in unified command to make this a better event. And we  
22 all, as chiefs from other counties, have this conversation of, I  
23 believe, a lot of lessons learned from this to help all of us make  
24 this never happen again. I mean, I understand that rail is the  
25 safest way to move product, but we have to be ready for the event

1 of catastrophic incidents, I mean, whether it's this or in my  
2 area, fracking shoots, so we're getting all kinds of rail cars of  
3 butane and crude and it's a different event and a different  
4 magnitude, but it could be just as detrimental.

5 Q. Right. What about the training aspect with the first  
6 responding fire chiefs, wherever that may be, do you feel anything  
7 needs changed with the training aspects, on how people might  
8 respond to a situation like this?

9 A. I believe that we need to see more of those safety trainings  
10 that are out there that you can go put your hands on and look at.  
11 We have Wheeling & Lake Erie, Wheeling & Lake Erie rail in Stark  
12 County, who over the last 5 years have had that a couple times.  
13 However, they were trying to get it here this year, it's not  
14 available, so I think that if there is more money that can be  
15 placed either by the railroads or by the federal government to get  
16 those -- more trainings out to those departments, I think a lot of  
17 the fire departments in the local area would want to go after that  
18 training now to see a difference in the lids (ph.).

19 And I understand that's part of this Norfolk Southern plan, I  
20 read the daily paper every day and you can watch (indiscernible)  
21 every day, but they're looking to build a facility of similar type  
22 in East Palestine, which would be a 30-minute drive versus a  
23 2-hour drive, two-and-a-half hour drive to go see that event now.  
24 But I think a lot of it's going to have to come down to is, it has  
25 to be able to get into the community of local fire departments or

1 at least in a general area, or in my area, you can pick up  
2 departments from three counties, Stark, Carroll, and Columbiana, I  
3 could host it right there, the tracks are right behind the fire  
4 station, it's going to get more local. You're not going to get  
5 people to drive great distances to get more safety training on a  
6 rail car, it's just --

7 Q. Right.

8 A. It's a different mentality from when you and I started how  
9 many years ago to what's blocking the door today.

10 MR. LLOYD: Yeah. That's all I have, no, thank you very  
11 much.

12 Mr. Downs or Ms. Lake, back to you. Thank you.

13 MR. DOWNS: Ms. Lake, any final thoughts?

14 MS. LAKE: I didn't have anything. Chief Carey couldn't get  
15 back on and just e-mailed me saying his questions were about the  
16 training levels of your department, Chief Stoller, and the hazmat  
17 team and then other members, such as certifications and levels,  
18 but Troy, I don't -- I know you kind of covered that in the  
19 beginning but I'll just leave that.

20 MR. STOLLER: So I have firefighters in my roster that have a  
21 36-hour card, although the majority do not have a Firefighter  
22 Level 2 card. So Firefighter Level 2 card now is 264 hours, by  
23 the time you add the emergency vehicle operations training on  
24 that, I have -- all my firemen are awareness-level trained and  
25 with over half of them being operations-level trained.

1 MS. LAKE: Okay.

2 MR. STOLLER: It's in the operational-level training. I  
3 myself have a tech background, hazmat tech background with a  
4 chemistry class. I haven't utilized that in quite a few years,  
5 since I've been fire chief, but I used to be a member of the  
6 county hazmat team. Stark County is a Type 2 hazmat team and  
7 Carroll County is un-typed, right? Carroll County has a hazmat  
8 team that is un-typed, and I believe the Columbiana County team is  
9 un-typed, as well.

10 MS. LAKE: Okay, great. Thank you. That's all I have.

11 MR. DOWNS: Great. Thanks, Ms. Lake.

12 BY MR. DOWNS:

13 Q. All right, Chief, thanks very much to yourself and all for  
14 the questions presented and responses received. So Chief, as  
15 we're wrapping up this interview, I have a couple of final  
16 questions and you gave us some very good kind of thoughts right  
17 now, but I'm going to pose the question, anyways. Relative to  
18 your role in the accident event, in retrospect, knowing what you  
19 know now, might you be able to offer any additional thoughts or  
20 observations on lessons learned, or is there anything that you  
21 might have done differently, so to help circumvent some  
22 challenges, pitfalls and the like?

23 A. I don't believe anything that I haven't already said. I  
24 won't do any different.

25 Q. Very good. That hits it nicely, thanks.

1 A. Mr. Richard?

2 Q. Yes?

3 A. The only thing might be as an event, better communications  
4 across the board.

5 Q. Better communications, fair enough. Thank you. So we've  
6 asked a number of questions today, so to close, is there anything  
7 we haven't asked you or might there be information or knowledge  
8 that you have relative to the accident, at least your response  
9 participation, which you believe might be important to the  
10 investigation which you'd care to share with us, share with the  
11 investigation? Nothing?

12 A. Nothing in an investigation. I will tell you that on a  
13 couple levels it's let us rethink of the resources that we need to  
14 have acquired at our agency level, right, we've always been  
15 concerned with how many engines, how many tankers, how many  
16 ladders are available, but what we haven't been good at, resource  
17 typing -- or not resource typing, but resource collecting of how  
18 many people have drones, pole cameras, those kind of things, which  
19 would be very helpful in this event to get close enough, to stay  
20 outside the hot zone, so to speak. Obviously, all those come with  
21 a cost, but a lot lesser of a cost than somebody's life and  
22 health, not knowing the reaction of the event and the chemicals  
23 down the road.

24 MR. DOWNS: Okay, great. Thanks. And if you do happen to  
25 think of something in addition to the above questions and answers,

1 as we -- as you presented, we welcome you to please contact us and  
2 I'll have you contact Ms. Lake or Mr. Lloyd.

3 Troy, would that be you, that you had originally contacted  
4 the chief?

5 MR. LLOYD: Yeah, that's fine. Absolutely, absolutely.

6 MR. DOWNS: Very good. Okay.

7 Again, thank you, Chief, for your time and your responses to  
8 our questions today. This will conclude our interview. The time  
9 is 12:01 p.m. and we can conclude our recording.

10 (Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT  
                                  IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO  
                                  ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023  
                                  Interview of Aaron Stoller

ACCIDENT NO.:               RRD23MR005

PLACE:                       Via Microsoft Teams

DATE:                        May 8, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

*Karen D. Martini*

---

Karen D. Martini  
Transcriber



## Downs Richard

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**From:** Downs Richard  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 8:50 AM  
**To:** Lloyd Troy  
**Cc:** Lake Cyndi; Dougherty Marc  
**Subject:** FW: NTSB / East Palestine, OH (RRD23MR005) - Interview Transcript transmittal [for review] + Errata Sheet

May 30, 2023

Mr Troy Lloyd / Panel 1 Chair – further to this, this to document that the Interview Transcript and the corresponding Errata Sheet transmittal, as described in the message below, had been sent to the identified Interviewee [recipient of the message below], to afford an opportunity to provide transcript corrections / comments, in which no reply had been, as yet, forthcoming in response to this transmittal inquiry.

Accordingly, given the approaching due-date for the required submission of Exhibits into the public docket for the Public Hearing, which would include the Interview Transcript and corresponding Errata Sheet, this to document that the Interview Transcript [as received from the agency transcription contractor], and the corresponding Errata Sheet [as sent to the interviewee], will be placed into the public docket for the Public Hearing, which will include a copy of this message, as documentation of the transmittal non-response.

Further, if an Errata Sheet [with, or without, described transcript corrections / comments] for this transmittal non-response is subsequently received by the Panel 1 investigation, that responded documentation will be correspondingly placed into the public docket for the Public Hearing, as a follow-up docket-placement item, such to reflect that an Errata Sheet for the subject Interview Transcript had been conveyed to the investigation. -- Richard Downs, Jr., P.E. / Panel 1 [investigative support]

---

**From:** Downs Richard  
**Sent:** Friday, May 19, 2023 11:24 PM  
**To:** acstoller77@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Lloyd Troy <Troy.Lloyd@ntsb.gov>; Lake Cyndi <Cyndi.Lake@ntsb.gov>; Dougherty Marc <Marc.Dougherty@ntsb.gov>  
**Subject:** NTSB / East Palestine, OH (RRD23MR005) - Interview Transcript transmittal [for review] + Errata Sheet

May 19, 2023

Chief Aaron Stoller / Sandy Creek Joint Fire District –

First off, I want to thank you for your support to the NTSB Investigation, and for your participation in the interview as conducted in the investigation. The interview resulted in an official transcript that will be very useful to our investigative process and provide valuable insight to support the NTSB's Public Hearing, that is being scheduled to address the above referenced accident investigation.

As mentioned during the interview activity, you (as the interviewee) are afforded the opportunity to review the transcript that's generated from the interview recording, such to provide prospective transcript content corrections feedback to the investigation, which you would like to propose for consideration by the investigation.

Accordingly, to that end, attached please find a .pdf copy of your interview transcript (as received from the transcription contractor), which is hereby provided for your review / corrections response opportunity, along with an Errata Sheet (transmittal form).

Correspondingly, given the above, to execute this transcript review / feedback process, kindly please printout the attached transcript document and Errata Sheet, which will enable your review of the full transcript, in which the Errata

Sheet is used in your reply transmittal. Completion of the data in the Errata Sheet is self-explanatory (... simply check the appropriate response box, affix a signature, and date, and if needed, attach any identified transcript changes -- per the Errata Sheet).

Kindly please return to me, via reply email, the completed Errata Sheet, along with any transcript changes, in which it's requested that you kindly submit your response, even if there are no transcript changes identified, by **not later than May 24, 2023**.

Lastly, please note, [1] that investigation transcripts must be maintained as confidential at this time, in which the transcript is for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation, and [2] I welcome you to contact me, or any of my Tech Panel 1 colleagues (cc'd here, for your convenience), should there be any thoughts or questions regarding this transcript review / Errata Sheet response process.

Thank you for your support to the investigation, and for your assistance and cooperation in this response.



**Richard M. Downs, Jr., P.E.**  
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National Transportation Safety Board  
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations  
Washington, D.C. 20594

Date: May 19, 2023

Interviewee: Aaron Stoller / Sandy Creek Joint Fire District

Reference: **Errata Sheet** Transmittal / **Transcribed Interview**, regarding the February 3, 2023, Norfolk Southern Railway train derailment and fire, in East Palestine, OH -- NTSB Investigation number RRD23MR005

As indicated during the subject interview, attached for your attention and response, please find a copy of the transcript of your interview that was conducted on May 8, 2023, which was compiled as a preparation activity [element], of an NTSB Public Hearing, that is being scheduled to address the above referenced accident. Kindly please review the enclosed transcript for accuracy, and please utilize this sheet to convey (to the investigation) any necessary editorial changes.

Your response in this may be either ...

- [1] submission of an 'itemized tabulation' of your suggested transcript changes (i.e., in a tabulation format, cite the relevant page and line number, along with any suggested change(s)), -- or --
- [2] you may 'redline' (i.e., manually, or digitally markup, with an inserted corresponding notation) any suggested changes to a copy of the transcript, to which kindly please initial any changes cited, in which only the individual pages containing the cited changes need to returned in your response.

When replying, please use this transmittal sheet for your response, even if there are no changes identified in your review, to which, please be sure to apply a checkmark to one of the three statements below, and please affix your signature and date. It's requested that you kindly please submit your response to me, via **reply email**, by **not later than** the CoB of **May 24, 2023**.

I have reviewed the enclosed transcript(s) from the above referenced accident, and ...

- I have no comment(s) to offer,
- my comments are submitted herewith (as an itemized tabulation), --- OR ---
- my comments are indicated on the attached / marked-up ("redlined") transcript copy.

Respondent's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that investigation transcripts must be maintained as confidential at this time, in which the transcript [provided at this time, for your accuracy review] is for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation. Upon NTSB receipt of your errata sheet response to this, a copy of the transcript and corresponding errata sheet may be placed in the public docket. If you have any questions, I welcome you to contact me by phone, or by reply email.

Thank you for your support to the investigation, and for your assistance and cooperation in this response.

-- Richard Downs, Jr. / Technical Panel 1 – Emergency Response Efforts



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