

BLOTTER



FILE

Sabine Parish

Sabine Parish man pinned under log truck, killed

A Sabine Parish man doing some shade tree mechanic work on his truck was pinned under the vehicle and killed early Sunday, the Sabine Parish Coroner's office reports.

Just before 9:30 a.m., Deputy Coroner Ron Rivers was called by the Sabine Parish sheriff's office, which reported the accident in the 200 block of Big Sepulvado Loop in the Ebarb Community. There, North Sabine first responders and Med Express personnel had already removed the victim, identified as 57-year-old Ray Rodney Rutherford, from underneath his 2006 Peterbilt log truck.

Rivers said he determined Rutherford was in the back yard of his residence doing maintenance work on the truck and had supported its front axle with a bottle jack. Rutherford was underneath the front end of the truck when for unknown reasons the jack came loose, causing the front axle to come down, pinning him.

Rutherford's wife, who was not home when the accident occurred, later found him under the truck and summoned help. First responders had to use a Kubota tractor and another jack to lift the log truck off Rutherford, who was deceased.

Rivers said the cause of death appeared to be asphyxiation. However, an autopsy has been ordered to determine the exact cause of death.

Rivers said there is no suspicion of foul play in the death.

—From Staff Reports

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Hospitals

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a nearby hospital took over operations. Three contracts closed an LSU hospital and shifted its services to private hospitals.

The Republican governor and the hospital operators say the arrangements have improved patient care, expanded services and cut down on wait times. Even critics of the deals say they don't see a way to return to the old charity hospital model.

But there are transition pains, repeatedly showing up in legislative financial discussions.

Jindal's \$1.1 billion budget proposal for the hospital deals next year would provide standstill funding. Hospital managers say they need \$159 million more, nearly \$88 million to pay for the New Orleans hospital, which will shift services from an interim facility to a larger, new hospital this summer.

Without the bump in spending, hospital leaders say they may have to scale back those heavily-touted improved services.

While they took over the services, the private



AP

Gov. Bobby Jindal, center, waits to be escorted by lawmakers, foreground, to address the opening session of the Louisiana State Legislature in Baton Rouge on April 13.

managers of the LSU hospitals and clinics didn't take on the liabilities associated with former and retired hospital employees, costs like termination pay, retiree health insurance and workers compensation expenses.

Millions of dollars in those costs are expected year after year, and LSU's medical schools have been saddled with the payments, struggling to cover costs estimated at more

than \$56 million next year.

So far, the Jindal administration hasn't come up with a plan to provide any money for those costs, though administration officials say they're looking at options.

Asked what happens if the medical schools are forced to absorb those costs, Larry Hollier, chancellor of the LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans, replied: "The term bankruptcy comes to

mind."

Sen. Ed Murray, D-New Orleans, said he was amazed "these things were not taken into account when we went down this road with privatization."

Already struggling with the costs from the hospital employees, LSU's Shreveport medical school is considered to be "at risk financially and programmatically," according to a consulting

History

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Civil War and the practices regarding the discharge of soldiers at the times. Following the Civil War and during Reconstruction that followed, Shreveport was garrisoned by elements of Custer's 7th Cavalry and the 80th U.S. Colored Troops, the famed "Buffalo Soldiers," among others.

The headquarters for Union troops during reconstruction is known today to have been where Festival Plaza now is located, just behind The Times building. But according to Joiner, the barracks for the Buffalo Soldiers were in what now is South Highlands.

He said he believes the troopers were quartered in barracks at what now is known as the Slatery House, a large white dwelling on Fairfield Avenue.

"The house was built in 1902, as I recall," he said. "The cavalry was in the back yard, where there once was a rose garden but now there's a garage apartment. But up until the late 1960s, 1968 or '69, you still could

see what I want to say are two-story barracks. Of course, by then they were falling down."

It's hard to say because few records of that era exist, are hard to find when they do and usually are unindexed.

"I have tried to track down the units' movement, but as easy as the Civil War is to research, Reconstruction is hard," Joiner said. "It's simply that in the reorganization of the Army after the Civil War it was so reduced, and the legacy of that is in record-keeping."

The best evidence of membership in the GAR

would be one of the simple dark-blue suits the old veterans wore, and a distinctive badge showing crossed cannons and the U.S. flag supporting an inverted five-pointed star.

According to the GAR library's website, the badges, made of bronze from captured Confederate cannon, were "produced by the millions and presented to all members upon induction into the order. This bronze was issued to the GAR by the War Department as needed. The badges were supplied by the National Quartermaster to the individual Posts and only

presented to members in good standing who had proved their honorable service in the Union forces in the Civil War. There is no specific number to trace on the badge. It will be almost impossible to match an individual badge to a certain member."

Unlike today, where discharged members of the military are provided transportation to a home of record, soldiers then were discharged in place. For many of the discharged soldiers, particularly those who were former slaves who had joined the Union Army, there were no homes of

firm's review of the privatization deal struck for the state-owned hospitals in north Louisiana.

Control of LSU's Shreveport and Monroe hospitals was turned over to the Biomedical Research Foundation of Northwest Louisiana, which had never run a patient care facility. The foundation operates the hospitals as University Health.

An audit showed the foundation lost more than \$703,000 during the first year of its hospital management — though Stephen Skrivanos, chairman of the foundation board, told a Senate committee the audit "basically shows that our expenses matched our revenues."

Sen. Sherri Smith Buffington, R-Keithville, questioned claims that services had grown under private management, saying many items listed as new or expanded were done when LSU was in charge.

She also raised concerns about an outside analysis that said the foundation's baseline financial projections show multi-million-dollar shortfalls continuing for years that are "not sustainable."

record, so the Shreveport area — Northwest Louisiana and East Texas — was where they remained and where the descendants of many live today, possibly unaware of their ties to the Civil War.

These are the people whose journals, diaries, letters, scrapbooks and family Bibles could provide vital information on this long-forgotten chapter in local history.

John Andrew Prime writes about military matters, history and interesting people for The Times. To expand on a story or suggest a future column, call him at (318) 459-3250 or send email to jprime@gannett.com.

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