

Indiana train crash kills 7, injures 70

GARY, Ind. (AP) — One commuter train sideswiped another at a narrow trestle Monday, ripping open cars "like a big razor blade" and killing seven people, an official said. Nearly 70 were injured, two critically.

"The glass was flying. It was a tremendous impact," Margaret McNeill, a passenger in the front car of one of the trains, said as she walked uninjured from the crash site.

"We hung on and there were people flying around," said Jane Mitchell,

another uninjured passenger. Passenger Abir Khater described the chaos after impact: "There was panic and people were saying 'get out, get out,' and other people saying 'sit down, just sit down.'"

The eastbound and westbound trains collided shortly after 9:30 a.m., said John Parsons, spokesman for Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District, which owns the Chicago-to-South Bend rail line. The cause of the crash was under investigation by the

National Transportation Safety Board. About 100 people were on the trains, a two-car No. 7 eastbound from Chicago and a three-car No. 12 from South Bend, Parsons said. Gary is about 30 miles southeast of downtown Chicago.

The trains crashed where two tracks overlap in a ganlet west of a trestle that is too narrow for two trains to pass. It was unclear if both were moving or one was stopped waiting to cross the trestle.

The front cars were mangled and

the metal on one side ripped away. Passengers were thrown to the floor. Seats were ripped from their moorings.

"The walls were ripped open, creating an effect like a big razor blade," Gary Fire Chief Ben Perry said.

Several of the dead were decapitated, Perry said.

Rescuers passed stretchers through gaping holes in one of the cars to remove the dead and injured, some of whom had been trapped in the wreck-age.



AP/Carl Fox

UNL police investigating reports of prank phone calls

By Sarah Scalet
Staff Reporter

Reports of a prank caller who identifies himself as a psychologist are being investigated by the UNL police department, and one official Monday encouraged students not to answer suspicious phone survey questions until they have contacted the police.

Sgt. Mylo Bushing of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln police department said a total of 14 such calls had been reported since last September, with the most recent call reported Friday.

The calls apparently were made by the same man, Bushing said, based on voice descriptions and the types of questions he asked.

The caller told women he was doing a survey

Caller says he is conducting psychological survey

for the psychology department, Bushing said. However, Bushing said the psychology department notifies the police before doing any phone surveys, so police know if a survey is legitimate.

After telling the women about the survey, the caller asked increasingly personal questions about the type of clothing the female wore, Bushing said.

In many cases, the caller also contacted the woman's parents and told them their daughter was wearing short skirts to class, Bushing said. In some cases, he questioned the woman's mother about her clothing.

Bushing said he did not want to release specific details about the investigation because

the case was pending.

One UNL freshman who received such a call last semester, Kristen Davis, said the man was professional and initially had convinced her the survey was legitimate.

He started out with simple questions, Davis, a psychology major, said. But then he started to ask her how short her skirts were, whether she wore nylons, how far she unbuttoned her shirt and what her bra size was, she said.

Davis said the man also called her grandmother, supposedly representing a dress-code committee, and said her roommate had come to class in revealing clothing.

One policy change made last semester, partially in response to such calls, eliminated the

use of phone numbers on student research lists posted in Burnett Hall, Ross Thompson, a UNL psychology professor, said.

Thompson said no definite evidence linked the prank calls to student lists including phone numbers in the psychology department.

Students were required to participate in research as part of Introduction to Psychology 181, Thompson said.

In the past, he said, students signed up for research with their names and phone numbers. That way, the researcher could remind them the night before it was scheduled.

Thompson said even the possibility that the calls were related was a risk the psychology department was uncomfortable with, he said.

Names and phone numbers made it too easy for mischief to occur, he said.

Snow

Continued from Page 1

"The ramps are just a little too steep for the snow and ice," the sophomore psychology major said. "You can't get much traction."

Nerud was unable to climb the ramp at Avery Hall with his front-wheel-drive wheelchair, and he missed his Tuesday class.

In another incident, while coming off the ramp at Selleck Hall, he hit a patch of ice and nearly slid off the sidewalk.

Nerud said the worst areas are at the bottom of the ramps where water collects and then freezes.

Also, the rugged sidewalks made it tiring to get around and sometimes caused electric wheelchairs to break down, he said.

Craig Cassell, a graduate student in human development, said he wasn't satisfied with the snow removal.

Cassell said he thought the crew should have cleaned the area around Selleck Residence Hall sooner. But, he said, he realized they probably cleared the area as soon as they could.

Cassell also said the area west of Selleck posed a problem. The lift on the van that takes him to his East Campus classes could not be lowered because there was too much snow between the sidewalk and street.

Chad Wood, a sophomore electrical engineering major, said last week's snow removal job resembled that of the previous year.

Like others, Wood had problems with rugged sidewalks. Because he had trouble getting from Selleck to Hamilton, he missed his Monday class.

When people live in Nebraska, they have to expect these types of conditions, he said.

Christy A. Horn, coordinator of services for students with disabilities,

agreed.

"They (snow removal crews) did the best they could under the circumstances of snow and ice," she said. "There is a lot of campus to clear."

In response to student complaints, Wilbur Dasenbrock, director of landscaping services, said that handicap ramps were a top priority in the snow removal, but clearing other areas presented a problem.

"It's really difficult for us to know where our wheelchairs are going," he said. "Without knowing that exactly, then it's really hard to give them a lot of priority. There may be a time when we get more sophisticated in finding

“The ramps are just a little too steep for the snow and ice. You can't get much traction.”

— Nerud
sophomore psychology major

those things out.”

That time may have come. Horn said that her office would be mapping out a snow route on campus in the next couple of weeks after surveying students and staff members at the university.

The snow route will identify areas heavily used by people with disabilities. Those areas will receive extra attention in snow removal, and maintenance vehicles and equipment will not be parked in those areas.

But in the meantime, people with disabilities may have to face snow again without the benefit of a snow route. The National Weather Service has issued a winter storm watch for tonight and Wednesday, with significant snowfall possible along with freezing rain and drizzle.

POLICE REPORT

Beginning midnight Friday

- 9:37 a.m. — Computer mouse taken, Henzlik Hall, \$72.
- 11:27 a.m. — Checkbook taken, Sigma Phi Epsilon, 601 N. 16th St., \$40.
- 12:10 p.m. — Purse taken, Andrews Hall, \$315.
- 1:10 p.m. — Nails scattered in parking lot, Dental College.
- 7:07 p.m. — Male with abdominal pains, Nebraska Union, transported to Lincoln General Hospital.

Beginning midnight Saturday

- 12:34 a.m. — Male jumped on hood of vehicle, Sandoz Hall parking lot, \$100.
- 4:33 a.m. — Glass panels on fire extinguisher damaged, Cather Hall, \$45.

8:23 a.m. — Wallet taken, Beltzer Baseball Field and Stadium, \$60.

- 9:56 a.m. — Watch taken, Campus Recreation Center, \$250.
- 4:10 p.m. — Car stereo taken, remote parking lot on New Hampshire Street, \$490.
- 4:48 p.m. — Person with warrant arrested, Nebraska Union, transported to Lancaster County Jail.
- 5:55 p.m. — Wallet taken, Campus Recreation Center, \$95.

Beginning midnight Sunday

- 10:05 a.m. — Hit-and-run accident, West Stadium, \$600.
- 8:36 p.m. — Wallet taken, Nebraska Union, \$55.
- 11:23 p.m. — Wallet taken, Lutheran Center, 535 N. 16th St., \$190.

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