



Rod Rolle/NewsMakers
SUZIE PECH-TORRES of Oxnard, Calif., stands at a memorial for the crash victims of flight 261 in Point Hueneme on Wednesday.

Two pieces of Alaskan plane found

PORT HUENEME, Calif. (AP) — Searchers found the intact tail of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 and recovered the flight data recorder Thursday, two pieces key to determining why the jetliner plummeted into the ocean. Underwater robots exploring the ocean floor found where the wreckage came to rest after the MD-83 crashed Monday, killing all 88 aboard.

A submersible sent up video images of a piece of the fuselage with four windows, several large pieces up to six feet wide and numerous smaller pieces. The airline's logo — the smiling face of an Alaskan Eskimo — is clearly visible on the tail, said John Hammerschmidt, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

Hammerschmidt declined to say whether searchers had found any bodies, some of which are believed trapped under the debris.

Navy crews had earlier salvaged the cockpit voice recorder from about 640 feet of water. The flight data recorder recovered Thursday about 200 feet away would show the positions of the plane's controls and whether a problem with the horizontal stabilizer on the tail was merely a symptom of a larger failure that led to Monday's crash.

"That will tell the tale," said William Waldock, associate director for the Center for Aerospace Safety Education at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

The discovery came as friends and relatives of the crash victims gathered along the beach facing the Santa Barbara Channel for a private memorial.

A few mourners roamed the shore alone, some clustered in small groups and others waded a few feet into the ocean. The group gathered inside the Point Mugu Naval Air Weapons Station, and reporters were kept out of the compound.

From the beginning, the investigation has focused on the horizontal stabilizer because the pilots had reported problems with it.

On Thursday, Hammerschmidt detailed interviews with Alaska mechanics, who described helping the pilots troubleshoot a "runaway stabilizer," which forced the plane's nose down.

At one point, the pilots asked if there were any hidden circuit breakers for the stabilizer's electrical controls. That suggests they already had shut off one set of circuit breakers — a standard remedy for a runaway stabilizer, also known as runaway trim.

World and Nation Dailines

Washington

Bauer to drop out of GOP race
WASHINGTON (AP) — Gary Bauer, the janitor's son who served in Ronald Reagan's White House and mounted a presidential bid of his own, has decided to drop out of the race, a source close to the conservative activist said Thursday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Bauer plans to announce the move at a news conference this morning.

Bauer is a well-established social conservative who fared well in presidential debates, needling front-runner George W. Bush on abortion and China policy.

However, Bauer had trouble carving out a constituency in a crowded field of GOP conservatives.

He could not climb above 1 percent in the critical New Hampshire primary.

Washington

NASA ready to help station
WASHINGTON (AP) — NASA administrator Daniel Goldin said the United States will launch its own service module to the International Space Station late this year if Russia fails to put up a module by this summer.

Goldin, in an interview with journalists Thursday, said he hopes the Russians, who are more than a year behind schedule, will complete and launch a service module to the space station by July.

But if they fail, he said, the U.S. will be ready.

The Russian part of the space station initially fell behind schedule because the government failed to provide the funds to meet the commitment.

The effort was further delayed recently by two failures of Proton rockets, the launcher the Russians will use to put the modules in orbit.

Michigan

Ford offers workers computers
DETROIT (AP) — For \$5 a month, Ford Motor Co. will offer all of its 350,000 workers worldwide a home computer, color printer and Internet access.

The offer, available beginning in April, is one of the largest efforts by a company to equip its workers with computers and might ratchet up pressure on Ford's competitors to match the offer.

The deal, coordinated by PeoplePC Inc., of San Francisco, requires monthly payments of \$5 for three years, or \$180 total.

Spain

Shop floor falls during sale
MADRID, Spain (AP) — The floor collapsed under a crush of bargain hunters Thursday in a store in southern Spain, sending dozens of shoppers and piles of debris plunging into the basement. At least 161 people were injured.

The collapse came as several hundred people jammed around a cash register to buy one of 36 armchairs on sale for \$17.65, down from the stated regular price of \$229.

The Muebles Peralta furniture store in the town of Dos Hermanas, on the outskirts of Seville, had opened at 10 a.m. for the sale. The floor collapsed about five minutes later.

At least 13 people were in serious condition, and 138 were hospitalized for less severe injuries, said Zacarias Cotan, a police spokesman in Seville. A 20-year-old woman had to have her crushed spleen and left kidney removed, while a pregnant woman suffered a broken pelvis.

Avalanches strike Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — The worst avalanches to hit Alaska in decades have closed the only highway linking the Kenai Peninsula with Anchorage and the rest of the state, leaving thousands of residents and travelers stranded for a fourth day.

"This is the worst we've had since the '70s for sure and probably before that," said Chris Kepler, a maintenance chief for the state. "We have rain and snow. We have all the

ingredients for perfect avalanches."

Residents of the Kenai Peninsula were warned Thursday not to expect relief anytime soon.

Kepler did not know when the highway would reopen.

About 2,000 people were without power, and Chugach Electric officials said it could be seven days or more before electricity is restored.

The avalanches have cut off all traffic and left a number of tiny communities on the Kenai Peninsula, a

rugged, triangle-shaped land mass that juts into the Gulf of Alaska, even more isolated than usual. The 127-mile Seward Highway is the only road between the peninsula and Anchorage.

Though Kenai Peninsula residents live about 40 miles south of Anchorage, they still count on being able to drive there to run errands such as buying groceries, and in some cases go to work, during the winter.

Gov. Tony Knowles will seek federal disaster assistance, spokesman Bob King said.

A railroad worker was killed by an avalanche Tuesday. Kerry Brookman, 53, was operating a bulldozer to clear tracks next to the highway when a slide swept him and the bulldozer 500 feet.

WEATHER

TODAY

Partly cloudy
high 36, low 21

TOMORROW

Partly cloudy
high 42, low 22

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 20, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year, weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.
Subscriptions are \$60 for one year.
Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 20, 1400 R St., Lincoln NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
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