

Atchison Airshow Airplane Crashes; Two Killed



Photo

credit: Atchison County Sheriff's Office

(KAIR)--The plane that crashed Sunday morning is believed to have been the same one flown in Saturday night's aerobatics show that accompanied Atchison's Amelia Earhart festival.

Atchison County Sheriff Jack Laurie says the plane, believed to be the 1944 Roth American P-51D Mustang used in the show, was piloted by 64-year-old Vlado Lench. The Bluff Ridge, Illinois pilot, who helmed the plane during the air show, was killed in the wreck.

Also killed was his passenger, 34-year-old Bethany Root, of Atchison. She served as the General Manager at Atchison's Amelia Earhart Airport.

Laurie says the plane, named “Baby Duck,” took off from airport around 10:00 Sunday morning and crashed around 10:15 in the area of 234th and Ness Road, near Cummings.

The cause of the crash is not immediately known.

According to the report from the Kansas Highway Patrol, the plane was traveling southeast, 5 miles south of the airport, when it turned around and then dove towards the ground, where it collided, at 3618 Ness Road.

The FAA will conduct the investigation.

Atchison City Manager Trey Cocking Sunday afternoon issued a statement to MSC News regarding the tragic crash. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families and friends. Bethany was making a big difference at the airport and the City Commission and myself are very saddened by her sudden death."

The Atchison County Sheriff's Office, the Kansas Highway Patrol, Atchison County EMS and the Atchison County Rescue Unit all assisted at the scene of the fatal crash.

Many Signals Communications