

North Dakota Briefs

Health department releases cause of oil-related death

BISMARCK — The 19-year-old man who died at a well pad in April succumbed to cardiac arrhythmia, according to a North Dakota Department of Health forensic report.

Zachary Buckles, who worked for a company subcontracting with Continental Resources, was found unresponsive on April 28 at a well approximately 10 miles south of Williston, according to the report. He was walking across a catwalk near tanks of petroleum when he collapsed. He died at the scene.

Initial reports indicated Buckles had been testing gauges on the oil tank when he was overcome by hydrocarbon vapors, Occupational Safety and Health Administration Area Director Eric Brooks previously told Forum News Service. Petroleum vapor exposure was listed not as the main cause, but as a significant contributor to Buckles' death. Other conditions included cardiac hypertrophy, coronary hypogenesis and obesity.

The report did not list Buckles' residency.

Brooks said this was the fourth oil-related death since Oct. 1.

April Baumgarten

Driver charged in crash that killed two sisters

HILLSBORO — A Nielsville, Minn., man has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide, accused of drunken driving in a May crash that killed two sisters who were riding in his vehicle.

James Gregory Yahnke, 51, was charged Wednesday in Traill County District Court with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide, Class A felonies.

Teja Robin Beyer, 21, of Red Lake Falls, Minn., and Mercedes Dawn Rowley, 23, of Sharon, were killed in the rollover crash May 17 about 12

miles northeast of Hillsboro. The sisters were ejected from the side windows of the 2014 Dodge Challenger after it hit the bumpy surface of Traill County Road 17 at a high rate of speed.

The sisters had both been strapped into the same seat belt, one sitting on the other's lap, court documents say.

Law enforcement officers interviewed Yahnke at the scene, and he allegedly admitted to having had "apparently too much" to drink before getting in the car to drive himself and his passengers, according to court documents.

A warrant has been issued for Yahnke's arrest.

Forum News Service

Higher Education board approves allocation request, tuition freeze

SHBE Officials asks state Legislature for \$84.4M

to fund student affordability items, \$14.7 million to fund one-time expenses like more data security and petroleum engineering equipment for the University of

Dakota, \$18.5 million in one-time expenses for the new School of Medicine, \$1.6 million for the Forest Service, and \$1.6 million for mental health pro-

grams, according to use didn't sit well with Espgaard, who said the proposal "needed some work" before going to the Legislature.

Pathways

The Pathways to Student Success Program, which would raise admission standards at universities and push some students to two-year universities before attending four-year and research institutions, was also discussed.

One committee recommended Pathways embody higher acceptance standards at universities but also include a weighting scale that puts more weight on high school GPA than ACT and SAT

For example, students would need a high school GPA of 3.0 and an ACT score of 21 to be admitted to research institutions UND and ND State University but not ND State if they had a GPA of 3.0 and an ACT score of 21.

Some officials advised conservatively that the allocation would be a good idea.