



State of New Mexico

Department of Public Safety

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Hot Air Balloon Accident Results In Fatal Injury

Santa Fe – State Police officers were called to a fatal balloon accident this morning just after 8:00 AM. Upon the officers arrival they learned that Mr. Keith Sproul 49 year old male from North Brunswick, New Jersey was piloting a hot air balloon “Wings of Wind”. The balloon for an unknown reason traveled towards the power lines, and made contact with them just west of the State Road 528 and Calle Bonna Tierra intersection.

Upon contact the balloon fuel line became severed, shortly their after on an additional contact with the power lines the gondola became fully engulfed in flames. Mr. Sproul fell approximately 60 feet and was subsequently airlifted to University of New Mexico Hospital, as a result of the injuries sustained from the fire and the fall; Mr. Sproul was last listed in critical condition.

Co-pilot Mr. Stephen Lachendro 49 year old male from Butler, Pennsylvania also fell from the gondola shortly after Mr. Sproul at an approximate distance of 45 feet. Mr. Lachendro died as a result of the accident. FAA Agent’s were called to the scene to assist in the investigation.

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