

# NTSB leading investigation into Saturday's plane crash

Coroner says no autopsy will be performed, massive trauma cited in pilot's death.

By Brandon Macz, Daily News staff

The National Transportation Safety Board will lead the investigation into the cause of a fatal plane crash Saturday in Viola during a barbecue hosted by the Latah County Republicans.

William "Randy" Humble, 60, had been flying a Lake Amphibian DA-4-550 performing an aerial show with another aircraft around 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

It appears his plane stalled before crashing, according to initial information provided by Allen Kenitzer, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, which is also assisting with the investigation. Witnesses reported hearing the plane's engine revving loudly prior to the crash, according to a release by the Latah County Sheriff's Office

An autopsy will not be performed based on witness statements regarding Humble's health and discussion with the FAA, said Cathy Mabbutt, Latah County coroner.

"He died from massive trauma, so he died on impact," she said. "The FAA will be sending some blood off for toxicology, and I will be as well."

Several witnesses at the barbecue, including Latah County Sheriff Wayne Rausch, responded to the crash site near Saddle Ridge and Four Mile roads.

"When it went down, it went out of sight behind a ridge line," said Walter Steed, chairman for the Latah County Republicans. "Nobody at the barbecue actually saw it hit. ... You heard a thud and the engine wasn't running."

Steed said area farmers using equipment made a fire line around the plane, which had set grass ablaze there.

He said his understanding is that Gerald Weitz, whose home was used for the barbecue, sometimes used Humble's flying services, however, the Latah County Republicans were not paying him to be there.

Humble was a construction contractor in Moscow and kept his plane at the regional airport, according to the sheriff's office.

Kenitzer said the NTSB typically posts a preliminary report on its website within two weeks of an accident, but an official cause for the crash could take several months.