Man Dies in Oil-tank Blast

PAUL FOY, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A welder died after sparking an explosion while using his torch on a crude oil storage tank at an eastern Utah well site, the state's largest oil producer told regulators.

Newfield Exploration Co. notified the Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining that the blast Tuesday night occurred during routine maintenance and killed a contract worker, said Jim Springer, a spokesman for the state agency. Another man was injured.

Killed in the blast was Tyson Boren, 28, of Neola, a welder for Boren Construction Co., said Uintah County sheriff's Cpl. Brian Fletcher.

Newfield's well pumper was taken to a hospital with injuries. Rusty Harris, 32, is expected to recover, Fletcher said.

Fletcher said some kind of welding was being done on the tank or a valve when the blast occurred near rural Myton, about 100 miles east of Salt Lake City. The tank contained a mix of crude oil and wastewater.

A medical examiner removed Boren's body Wednesday for an autopsy.

"It's a tragic event. Our thoughts are with the families," Newfield spokesman Keith Schmidt said. "We pride ourselves on a safe work environment and will be doing a full assessment of the unit."

Newfield Exploration Co., based at The Woodlands, Texas, produced 8.5 million barrels of crude oil in Utah during 2012, making it the state's top producer by far, according to drilling records.

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