



St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office

Special Services Department

220 Judge Edward Dufresne Parkway, Luling, LA 70070

Voice (985) 783-1355 • Fax (985) 783-1195

Greg
Champagne
Sheriff

News Release

*Corporal James Grimaldi
Public Information
May 21, 2018*

Helicopter Crash Update:

Sheriff Greg Champagne reports that the third occupant of the helicopter crash that was pronounced deceased while on scene of the crash site was Ryan Lamont Cardwell of Watonga, Oklahoma. Cardwell, a 33 year old male, worked for a company called Air2 that was contracted by Entergy to perform services on the Entergy transmission line right-of-way where the crash occurred.

The finding of Cardwell concluded search operations, with all three subjects that had been aboard the helicopter accounted for. The helicopter crash was reported shortly before 11:00 a.m. on May 20, 2018 in a marsh land area off of Magnolia Ridge Road in Boutte, LA. Immediately, the first two occupants of the helicopter, a crewman and the pilot, were located and transported to a local area hospital. The crewman, Chance Mills, a 33 year old male from Missouri, sustained what appeared to be severe injuries. The pilot, Kenneth Gestal, a 38 year old male from Florida, had what appeared as less severe injuries.

First responders were only able to access the scene by airboat, all terrain tracked vehicles, and helicopter due to the remote location of the crash.

The Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board were contacted and have since taken over the investigation into the crash.