

Autopsy sheds little light on cause of McMinn's fall

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Long time Wauneta man, Rodney 'Rod' McMinn, 51, was pronounced dead after a tragic accident at the Wauneta Roller Mills on Feb. 1. McMinn fell into a bin of corn pellets while working to unplug an auger.

At the time of the accident the cause of McMinn's death was unknown. Those close to the situation were hopeful that the autopsy would shed some light on McMinn's fall.

Chase County Attorney Arlan Wine released the findings of the autopsy late last week. The autopsy report stated that McMinn died of an accidental death by asphyxiation.

The exact circumstances surrounding McMinn's fall into the bin that day will likely never be known.

Chase County Sheriff Kevin Mueller reported that McMinn had been loading a truck with corn pellets on Feb. 1 when the auger became plugged.

McMinn and the truck driver worked to release the clog from the bottom of the bin. After their unsuccessful attempt to get things moving from below, McMinn went to the top of the bin to try to get the pellets moving.

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The truck driver continued to work on the clog from below. After some time, individuals went to the top of the bin to check on McMinn and discovered that he had fallen into the bin of corn pellets.

Local emergency teams worked tirelessly to try to free McMinn from the bin.

Emergency responders included the Chase County Sheriff's office, the Wauneta Volunteer Fire Department and EMS crew, personnel from Frenchman Valley Co-op, Wauneta Medical Clinic, Wauneta Co-op Oil and Village municipal workers.

Rogan and Ashley Einspahr of Wauneta, who purchased the Roller Mill from the Maxfield family last month, are unable to comment on the incident due to ongoing insurance and OSHA investigations.

McMinn was a long time Wauneta resident and had worked at the Roller Mills for over 20 years.