

Palisade mother, son survive train accident near Trenton

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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□□□ A car-train collision near Trenton early Saturday morning ended with an emergency flight to Kearney for a Palisade family. Shawn Flaig, a 2003 WP graduate, is now listed in stable condition at Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, but family members say his road to a full recovery promises to be long and painful.

Flaig was riding with his mother, Dwana Flaig, in the early hours of Saturday morning on a country road 2 miles west of Trenton.

Though neither remember the accident, Dwana's mother, Joann Ward, said the car she was driving hit the last railcar as it passed them. Since the road they were traveling was a country road, there was no crossing arm and the lights on the train weren't visible.

Ward said their car had been following Flaig's father, Ed Flaig, to their rural Palisade home. When he noticed that the lights were no longer behind him, he turned back and discovered the accident.

She said that when Ed arrived back at the scene of the accident, Shawn was on his feet and surveying the scene of the accident. Heading back home with Dwana and Shawn in his vehicle, Ed then began to realize that Shawn needed to go to the hospital.

Shawn was taken to Chase County Community Hospital in his father's vehicle, then immediately flown to Kearney where he was listed in critical condition.

Ward said Shawn was "broken from his neck to his waist" and was placed into a drug-induced coma and put on a respirator. His injuries included a broken shoulder blade, broken collarbone, broken ribs on both sides and a collapsed lung.

"He was hit from armpit to armpit," Ward explained. "We think he either got caught in the chest by the door of the car or landed on his chest on the train rail."

Dwana was wearing her seat belt and sustained no injuries from the accident. Shawn was not wearing his seat belt.

Shawn has been removed from the respirator and came out of the coma within 24 hours, Ward also explained. "Shawn will recover, but it's going to be a long and painful process for him," she said. "He's not fully sedated right now so as to allow for him to respond to them. As you can imagine, he's in a lot of pain."

Ward also said her family feels especially blessed that Shawn suffered no head trauma or spinal injury. "For that, we are very thankful," she added.

Shawn underwent a CAT scan Monday morning to check for internal bleeding. Ward said she did not know the results of that test yet.

The Hitchcock County Sheriff's Department had no information to release about the accident at press time, noting that it is still under investigation.

**Reporting By Dave Vrbas
The Wauneta Breeze**