

Explosion 1

MEH

3/27 (Wed PM & Thurs AM)

Authorities say a truck driver hauling ammonium nitrate was killed when his vehicle exploded on a south Arkansas highway.

Arkansas State Police say authorities have recovered the remains of 63-year-old Randall McDougal of El Dorado following the Wednesday morning blast west of Camden,. State police say the driver was employed by Blann Trucking Co. of Hampton and that the vehicle was carrying ammonium nitrate.

State police say the truck's brakes caught fire early Wednesday, and witnesses said McDougal left the vehicle to try to extinguish the blaze. Witnesses told police that the driver had returned to the truck when it exploded.

The blast left a large hole that stretches across the highway.

Melody Daniel, a spokeswoman with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, says it happened on U.S. 278 before 7 o'clock this (Wed) morning.

News01 0:12 "...is quite explosive."

Photos from the scene show a 15 foot crater was left in highway, while trees within a couple hundred feet were charred or blown apart. People in about a one mile radius were evacuated while authorities let the fire burn itself out. The windshields of a Camden fire truck and a school bus were also blown out. No children are reported to have been on the bus.