

HEALTH

Wisconsin man dies in tugboat accident on Mississippi



Rescue workers searched the area and attempted to gain access to an overturned tugboat that reportedly lost power and went over Lock & Dam No. 7 at Dresbach Wednesday morning. Three crewmen were on board when the accident happened. Crewman Tyler Trussoni did not make it out and drowned in the boat.

By Marion Renault

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DRESBACH — A 22-year-old Genoa, Wis., man has been identified as the victim who drowned when a tugboat capsized Wednesday morning at Lock and Dam No. 7 on the Mississippi River near Dresbach.

Tyler Trussoni was in the boat at 6 a.m. when it was swept over the roller gates after the boat apparently lost power, said Winona

County Sheriff Dave Brand. Trussoni's body was found by a diver from the middle level of the three-level boat at 3:15 p.m., Brand said. Trussoni was found wearing a life jacket.

"We did everything we could to save him but we couldn't do more," he said.

The search for Trussoni, coordinated by a dozen emergency organizations from both Minnesota and Wisconsin, began a shortly after 6 a.m. and included efforts using a camera-equipped robot, specialized divers and helicopters. A six-mile stretch of the Mississippi river from the dam to the Houston County line was temporarily closed by the Coast Guard, and reopened at 5 p.m.

Two other passengers were onboard at the time of the accident, Cody Blank, 24, of La Crosse, Wis., and Daniel Garmo, 61, of Desoto, Wis. Both were released from the hospital later that day.

The Winona County Sheriff's Office and Coast Guard still are investigating the cause of the accident.

The boat, Megan McB, is owned by LaCrosse-based Brennan Marine, whose business manager, Mark Binsfeld, confirmed that mechanical problems likely contributed to the accident, along with high waters and strong currents.

The [La Crosse](http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/authorities-id-missing-tugboat-crewman/article_c793954e-e3e4-11e2-8975-001a4bcf887a.html)

[Tribune](http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/authorities-id-missing-tugboat-crewman/article_c793954e-e3e4-11e2-8975-001a4bcf887a.html)(http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/authorities-id-missing-tugboat-crewman/article_c793954e-e3e4-11e2-8975-001a4bcf887a.html) reported that the Megan McB is Brennan's newest boat. Launched on Nov. 1 and christened just last month, the vessel was built by Tel City Boat Works in Tel City, Ind. The Megan McB was assigned to run 24 hours a day, seven days a week switching barges, fleeting and assisting at the lock, the Tribune said.

The water at the lock and dam was flowing almost three times what it normally does, up from 33,000 cubic feet per second to almost 89,000, according to George Stringham, a spokesperson for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St Paul District.

It's the second time this year a boat has gone over the roller gates and capsized there. Eleven people survived when a houseboat lost power and was swept through on May 27. That vessel remains partially submerged about a mile downriver from Wednesday's accident.

In 2007, a family of four drowned at Lock and Dam 7 when the boat was sucked back into the dam. One of the bodies, that of a 6-year-old boy, was never recovered, Brand said.

The shore on Wednesday was filled with onlookers and people who had arrived to fish. Anthony Winn, 56, of Onalaska, Wis., said he experienced motor failure just upstream of Lock and Dam No. 7 about 16 years ago. A spare motor in the boat prevented he and his sons from a similar fate as Wednesday's tugboat, but he still sounded the call for caution — particularly with the July Fourth holiday, which often is one of the biggest boating periods on the river.

"You've gotta stay away from this system," said Winn, a carpenter. "It's like a toilet bowl — it just sucks you in."

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