

Hickory Man Killed in US 321 Crash

Written by Steve Frank

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US 321 is back open to traffic south of Blowing Rock after a fatal accident that involved two trucks and a Jeep. The State Patrol has identified the man killed as 41-year old Michael Allen Ray of Hickory, driver of a panel truck struck by a skidding, overturned tractor trailer. The investigation is ongoing, according to the investigating trooper, but he was able to say that the crash sequence started when a tractor trailer, southbound on 321, lost brakes and overturned as the trucker struggled to control the rig, the truck skidding into the north-bound lane where it struck the panel truck and Jeep, killing Michael Allen Ray, injuring his passenger. The tractor trailer driver was also hurt. Materials from the overturned truck ignited and started a grass and woods fire on the side of the road, according to the trooper, but none of the vehicles burned. Law enforcement blocked the road at Green Hill Road at the Green Park Inn and north of Lenoir for over 8 hours before opening up one lane, alternating north and south-bound traffic through the site until late into the evening.

Photos: WSOC-TV