

Amanda Price
Commissioner

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STATE OF ALASKA



Department of
Public Safety

Anchorage, Alaska

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mid-Air Collision Leaves Seven Dead on the Kenai Peninsula

Wreckage temporarily halted Traffic during emergency response

July 31, 2020 (SOLDOTNA, Alaska)— At approximately 0827 hours on 7/31/2020, AST in Soldotna received a report of a plane crash near mile 91.5 of the Sterling Highway. Due to safety concerns and some debris on the roadway the Sterling Highway was temporarily closed. The majority of the wreckage was located approximately two hundred yards from the road. The crash was reported by multiple witnesses. AST, AWT, Soldotna Police Department, Central EMS, State Parks and FAA all responded to the crash site.

Investigation determined that two planes were involved in a mid-air collision; one plane had a single occupant and the other aircraft had six people onboard. All but one person was deceased on scene however, the initial survivor succumbed to injuries during transport to the local hospital.

Troopers identified Rep. Gary Knopp, age 67, of Kenai, as the sole occupant of one plane. The six decedents from the other aircraft are identified as Pilot Gregory Bell, age 57 of Soldotna; Guide David Rogers, age 40 of Kansas; Caleb Hulseley, age 26, of South Carolina; Heather Hulseley, age 25 of South Carolina; Mackay Hulseley, age 24, of South Carolina; Kirstin Wright, age 23, of South Carolina. NTSB has been notified and will be conducting the investigation as to the cause of this crash.

“This is an unfathomable tragedy for multiple families today. The DPS sends a heartfelt condolence to all who lost a loved one in this mid-air collision,” said Commissioner Amanda Price, Department of Public Safety. “Troopers and partner agencies have worked together diligently at the scene and have reached out to next of kin to notify them of this heartbreaking incident.”

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