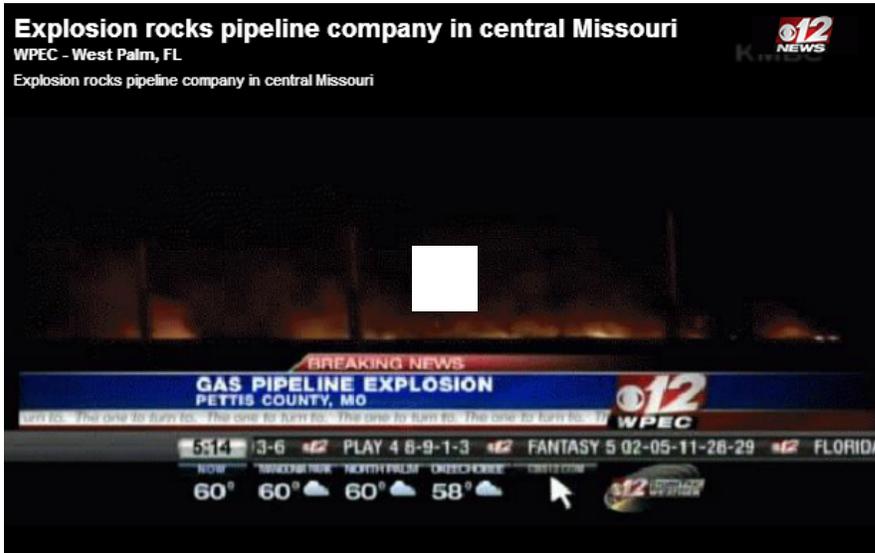


Sedalia explosion: Gas pipeline ruptures in Missouri

Sedalia explosion: A 30-inch natural gas pipeline rupture caused an explosion north of Sedalia, Mo., Thursday night. The fire caused by the explosion could be seen 12 miles away.

By Staff, Associated Press / November 30, 2013

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HUGHESVILLE, MO.

A 30-inch natural gas pipeline has ruptured in a rural area in western Missouri causing an explosion and fire that could be seen for several miles. No injuries were reported, authorities said Friday.

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The Pettis County Sheriff's Department said the pipeline, owned by Panhandle Eastern Pipeline Co., ruptured shortly before midnight Thursday outside Hughesville, about 75 miles east of Kansas City. The rupture and explosion set fire to several hog barns, farm outbuildings, equipment and hay bales, Pettis County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Egbert said.

"It was out in the field so there was not a whole lot around that area, which is a really good thing," Egbert said.

The sheriff's department said fewer than a dozen residents within three miles of the explosion were evacuated but were allowed back into their homes before dawn. Egbert said the pipeline has been shut down and that crews are working Friday to repair the line.

Pettis County Sheriff Kevin Bond told The Sedalia Democrat the explosion could be seen

12 miles away.

"I was just about to go to bed when I heard a boom. It didn't sound right so I stepped outside and could see the glow from the fire," Bond said. "There was a big fireball." He said the fire at the pipeline burned itself out about two and half hours later after company representatives shut the pipeline down.

Crews from several area fire departments responded to the scene.

Panhandle Energy spokeswoman Vicki Anderson Granado also said in a statement no injuries were reported and the company has rerouted gas from the area so deliveries wouldn't be affected. Houston-based Panhandle Energy is a subsidiary of Southern Union Co., which is owned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

"We are working with the local emergency responders to make sure the needs of any of those who were impacted are taken care of," the statement said.

Granado said it was unclear how long the investigation into what caused the rupture would take.

"This is a thorough process and as you know takes time," Granado said in an email.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Transportation, is working with state and local officials to gather information on the rupture.

PHMSA spokeswoman Jeannie Shiffer said the ruptured segment of the pipeline would be sent to an independent metallurgist for analysis and that the agency's investigation would take several weeks.

Another Panhandle Eastern pipeline ruptured in August 2008 in Cooper County, causing about \$1 million in damages, according to a PHMSA report.

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