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Three dead in plane crash

Aircraft went down in pasture in Carencro; flight originated in Texas



STAFF PHOTO BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

Emergency personnel and investigators work the scene of a plane crash Tuesday in a pasture near the intersection of Gloria Switch Road and La. 93 in Carencro.

BY JULIA GUILBEAU
and STEPHEN MARCANTEL
Staff writers

Three people were killed when a small plane crashed in a pasture near a Family Dollar off Gloria Switch Road in Carencro, according to the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office.

Officials were called to the scene about 11 a.m. Tuesday, Sheriff's Office spokesperson Sgt. Chris Cormier said, after a witness reported

a small plane circling the air, then crashing down near a roundabout at Gloria Switch Road and La. 93.

The aircraft landed in a pasture behind a home near a metal fence line in a rural part of Lafayette Parish.

Upon arrival, deputies confirmed that all three occupants aboard died at the scene.

Following notification of the family, the deceased have been identified as 58-year-old Bruce Verduyn, of The Woodlands, Texas; 46-year-

old Lydia Laws, of Spring, Texas; and 42-year-old Justin Ramsey, of The Woodlands.

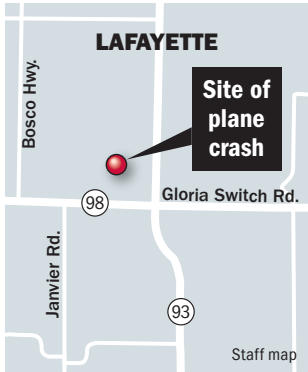
"The aircraft was a Baron Beechcraft; it's a small aircraft with two props. That's pretty much all we have right now," Cormier said at the scene.

Deputies were blocking off the scene as of 11:30 a.m. and asking drivers to avoid the area as they awaited investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration, which will lead the investigation.

The plane was identified by FAA registrant data as a 2006 Beechcraft G58 Baron, owned by Align Aviation in The Woodlands. Its latest registration certificate was issued Sept. 11, suggesting a recent change in ownership.

Ramsey was listed by the Texas Secretary of State's Office as the registered agent for Align Aviation.

FlightRadar24 showed the twin-engine plane took off from David



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STAFF FILE PHOTO BY JOHN BALLANCE

Louisiana soybean farmers are concerned that China's boycott will have a detrimental effect on next year's prices.

Shutdown hits La. farmers at harvest time

Low prices, high costs, trade uncertainty also fuel concern

BY JENNA ROSS
Staff writer

It's a key moment on Stephen Logan's farm in Gilliam. And in farming, he said, "timing is everything."

His team has harvested the final corn, soybeans, cotton and peanuts, in that order. Now they're spreading cereal rye seed and making plans for the next growing season.

But the government shutdown has made paying for those cover crops and finalizing those plans more difficult.

Each fall, farmers across Louisiana count on the now-shuttered U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies for financial assistance and information. For three weeks, they've been unable to get a loan from the agency, apply for a conservation program or receive a market report.

"All of that is shut down," Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain said.

That means many farmers are flying blind as they try to decide when to sell this fall and what to plant next February, a decision they often make months in advance.

"That information is needed now," Strain said.

Government programs are even more critical as farmers are struggling with high

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Two get
prison terms
for bribery

Kickback scheme
defendants sentenced
in federal court

BY CLAIRE TAYLOR
Staff writer

Two men involved with kickback schemes at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Lafayette District Attorney's Office were sentenced Tuesday in federal court.

Lafayette businessman Leonard Franques pleaded guilty in January 2024 to conspiracy to commit bribery involving the wildlife department. He also was implicated in the kickback scheme in the District Attorney's Office but wasn't charged in that scheme.

Federal Judge David Joseph in Lafayette on Tuesday sentenced Franques to a year in prison, a \$100,000 fine and ordered him to forfeit \$69,300. He will be allowed to report to prison after the

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