



Debbie Martin was Canada's first female WreckMaster level 6/7 A. She is the HAZMAT Spill Scene Coordinator/Technician for Diamond Emergency in Bolton, Ont.

Tackling a Tough Gig

Debbie Martin, Canada's first female WreckMaster level 6/7 A, reflects on the challenges and rewards of working with men, emergencies, and the Toxic Avenger.

Moving quickly but carefully down a highway in Bolton, Ontario, is an emergency response service vehicle nicknamed the *Toxic Avenger*. The *Avenger* is equipped with all the trappings of the trade: absorbents, shovels, jacks of life, even a vacuum system to empty leaking saddle tanks into overpucks or container drums.

Debbie Martin, WreckMaster, runs the vehicle. It's her baby. Martin works as the HAZMAT Spill Scene Coordinator/Technician for Diamond Emergency Services of Bolton, Ontario, and since joining the company in late 2001, she has responded to more than 350 incidents in Southern Ontario.

Getting Things Done

When Martin was working in Toronto as Food Service Manager for a 45-bed nursing

home for women, her husband, Jeff, was Operations Manager at Diamond Towing and Float Services. Sometimes Martin would bring food out to Jeff and the other towing operators at recovery scenes. While on-site, she started to help clean up spills. Her duties expanded. Biley operators don't always have the time to explain what they are doing to police or others, so Martin started to do the explaining.

The work was exciting, exhilarating. Martin became so interested in what she was doing, and found her time so consumed by it, that she decided not to continue her job in food service; instead she moved over to Diamond to work there full-time and on-call.

In her first year with Diamond, she took her first WreckMaster course. She wanted to understand the principles and methods of recovery, and she wanted to better assist the operators at recovery scenes who were

using heavy recovery rigging and air cushion recovery. She was certified at the 2/3 level in the summer of 2002. Since then she has earned WreckMaster Level 6/7 A Designation, the first Canadian woman to achieve this level.

Coffee to Go!

From the start Martin enjoyed not just the job but the industry itself. She loves the operators, the other members of the company, and the industry people she works with. She found the industry to be close-knit, with a family-like bond, exemplified at events like the family-oriented Tow Show. She also finds it fascinating to meet and work with the various emergency agencies that arrive on the same recovery scenes as Diamond. And she isn't bored. Every job is different, so every job is interesting.

Debbie's main work now falls into two

parts: first, assessing damage caused by the release of hazardous or toxic materials into the environment due to major motor vehicle upsets; and second, controlling, containing, and cleaning up those materials. As well, Martin runs the air cushions, assists in rigging the heavy wreckers, and often runs the control vehicle. Her job now keeps her so busy on the scene that she'd like to have someone working with her to take care of the documentation and the photos.

At one time, debris and fuel were often left behind after recovery operations. Now, with greater environmental awareness, even small one-on-one operators with smaller spills to deal with will call for Martin to clean up. Still, "generally, the bigger the vehicle, the bigger the fuel spill there will be," she says, and the more important it will be to do a good cleanup. As awareness and demand have grown, so has the company's business. Martin says: "Diamond has been establishing itself as one of the fastest-growing environmental teams in Canada, providing complete incident management assistance to the transportation industry."

Doing It Right, Doing It Better

This statement suggests the kind of business savvy Martin brings to her job. Doing good business these days means continually improving the business; and like all good business people Martin constantly examines her performance and the performance of her company, trying to make it better. "After a

Advice to women who want to enter the industry? "Get as much knowledge as you can; and get into a company that values training and research."

recovery, we discuss what we could have done better or more safely. So anything we can do to make things better in that regard, we are going to do. No one wants to make a call to a relative that their son or daughter is injured."

In her four years with the company, Diamond has faced only one potentially serious injury. (A worker fell. Fortunately, no major injury resulted.) Fatigue contributed to the accident—the injured worker had been on the scene for 13 hours.

Time constraints—the need to get the job done now—relentlessly contribute to fatigue. At a construction site, for instance, a contractor may have as many as 50 trucks on their way, and to make them wait would

be costly; or police may want a highway accident scene cleaned up before the approaching rush hour. Rapid road clearance becomes a priority. Martin finds that one of the best ways her company can minimize fatigue is to stagger who arrives when. For example, when the cleanup of spilled fuel can be done before the rigging, there may be no need for the rigging personnel to arrive as early as the commencement of operations.

Typically, the time for rigging a basic upright is three hours, but the job often involves a great deal more. Martin has driven seven hours north to an accident, with, of course, a seven-hour drive home, not to mention the time on-scene. It makes for long days.

A Woman Helping Others

"Unfortunately, we are busy," Martin says, trying to describe the element of tragedy which is inescapably part of her

Women at an accident scene tend to be more thorough: they take the time to stand back and assess things before jumping into the fray.

business. As with all good people working in the helping professions who respond to others' distress, Martin feels the urgency of her job. And the urgency has grown in the Bolton area. Changing traffic patterns have contributed to an increasing number of accidents. Local people are used to yesterday's traffic—they aren't used to driving among today's high number of trucks, and deadly crashes result.

It may seem odd to think of towing and recovery as one of the helping professions, but that's what it is for Martin, which may explain why being a woman in what is mostly a man's domain hasn't bothered her. "I have never been treated in a derogatory manner," she says. In fact, many of her co-workers are delighted to have a woman working among them.

With good reason. Martin has a great capacity to give to others. If a woman is involved in a collision, for instance, Martin is able to calm her down. She empathizes with people. The empathy she gives is recognized, appreciated, and effective.

Martin notes that her husband sees other benefits as well. Jeff prefers to have a woman on-scene because women tend to be more thorough: They are more likely to take the time to stand back and assess things



Debbie Martin with her baby, the Tonic Avenge.

before jumping into the fray.

What about being a black woman? Martin's interaction with male truckers has been limited, but none have ever been rude to her. If there are any negative attitudes, she says, people just keep it to themselves.

Martin finds that rather than acting negatively, the men are more likely to be protective—for example, ensuring that she doesn't see something disturbing. As well, during the final stages of a cleanup, there is always someone hanging back to ensure that Martin is okay. (Interestingly—and the fact probably says something about Martin herself—this courteous and protective attitude extends to operators from other towing companies. On one occasion when Martin had pulled her truck over to the side of the road to take a phone call, two different operators stopped to ask if she was okay.)

Martin smiles. "To work with men," she says, "a person has to have a good sense of humour." The remark suggests just how completely Martin is a paid-in-full member of a helping profession. For among towers, just as among ER workers, even in the most serious situations humour keeps things light and relieves tension.

You Can Do It

Women question Martin about her job, saying, "I couldn't do that." But they admire her for it. And so they should. The work can be hard—physically as well as emotionally. Once, Martin had to shovel manure out of the back of a truck. You work outside in any weather. Anxiety can build. When working in the dark or rain, it can be hard to know if a spill has been thoroughly cleaned up; in such cases, especially, you need to follow up with a second visit to see that the job is complete.

Despite the toughness the job requires, Martin has no complaints. She feels fortunate to work in a great industry, with such considerate members. "Get as much training as you can," she says; "get the right knowledge, and get into a good company that values training and research." And she adds: "Get WreckMaster training, man or woman. You are saving your life. It helps you watch your back. Training helps with confidence, and it helps you to be safer."

Martin would love to know more women in the towing world. She says: "My hat goes off to any woman in the industry already." There is a women's division of the towers association, but Martin would like to see a standalone Canadian women's towing association. She would especially like women to know that while her job is structured, she finds it similar to self-employment in that she is able to influence how much she earns by how much she works. Many women are searching for such flexibility.

Being the Best

Martin's personal goals are mixed in with her goals for the company. She wants to increase her own knowledge and training; and she wants to grow Diamond Emergency Services. She wants the company to continually improve its safety record and its effectiveness on incident sites. "The company is not particularly large, but it is specialized. We don't need to be the biggest—we just want to be the best."

By Gary Lund



2006 recipient of the Donnie Cruse Memorial Award for Heavy-Duty Recovery. Jeff Martin - Diamond Recovery Team from Bolton, Ontario, Canada.



by Terry Humelsine

Loaded Fuel Tanker Recovery

At approximately 3 p.m. on Sunday, November 13, 2005, the Diamond Recovery team from Bolton, Ontario, Canada, was just finishing uprighting and recovering a dump truck from a ditch, where it had rolled over and spilled most of its load and all of its diesel fuel. While Dan Prentice towed the casualty from the scene to Diamond's impound yard, Jeff Martin and his Diamond Recovery Team, along with Jeff's wife, Debbie Martin, and their hazardous materials recovery unit, proceeded to clean up the load spilled from the dump truck and the diesel fuel spill.

At approximately 3:30 Jeff Martin and his Diamond team received a call from Team 1 Emergency Services asking for assistance in uprighting a loaded fuel tanker that had rolled over on the Hanlon Expressway near the 401 interchange. With no additional information available, the Diamond team was quickly reassembled to respond to this latest request.

Team 1 arrived first on the scene to find a tri-axle tractor and 48-foot, 4-axle tank trailer loaded with just under 15,000 gallons of gasoline and completely upside down in the center of the median with several bulkheads leaking. The Team 1 responders immediately turned their attention to containing the spill with

their vacuum trucks and other equipment. A second call was received by Jeff Martin from Team 1 Emergency Services, requesting the Diamond team to respond with their lowboy trailer and mini-excavator, which by now had returned to the Diamond terminal and was being cleaned, serviced, and refueled by specialist Dean Demick. Team 1 had also requested the Diamond team respond with an additional flatbed to be dispatched to Team 1's terminal to pick up a backhoe for use at the accident scene.

Jeff Martin was the first of the Diamond Recovery team to arrive on the accident scene with his NRIC 40-ton sliding rotator. He was permitted to do a quick scene survey, keeping a distance of some 50 feet or more, in order to form a recovery plan. The second heavy wrecker, operated by Dan Prentice, arrived as Team 1's incident commander, Mitch Gibb, was advising Jeff there would be a several hours waiting period as Team 1 was preparing to drill the tank trailer to transfer the gasoline to a second tanker, while at the same time, containing the spill. During the discussion with Mitch, it was decided to immediately assemble any additional equipment that may be needed, so that when the go-ahead was given, there would be no additional delays.

Since the tractor's cab had been nearly torn off, it was decided a drop-deck would be most efficient for transport. Specialist Dan Withy was then dispatched to the Diamond terminal to pick up another drop-deck. Jeff Martin and Dan Prentice then assisted Team 1 in setting up their equipment while discussing how the recovery would be carried out. Debbie Martin was not to arrive on the scene and once briefed on the situation, she began contacting the rest of the Diamond team to bring them up to speed. Debbie then began to take what photos she could to document the scene before it got too dark. Specialists Dean Demick and Len Walker arrived with the



WreckMasters Debbie and Jeff Martin proudly accept the Donnie Cruse Memorial Award for heavy-duty recovery excellence.



Jeff and his recovery team reformulated aspects of their rigging to overcome obstacles created due to the compromised structural integrity of the power unit and damage to the fifth wheel.



excavator and backhoe, respectively. Once the equipment was unloaded, they began to dig catch basins to make it easier for the vacuum trucks to clean up the spill. After the catch basins were dug and prepared, they continued to assist the spill responders in whatever way they could.

By 7 p.m. all Diamond recovery operators were on scene with all the necessary rigging and equipment needed for the recovery. The second tractor and tank trailer did not arrive on scene until approximately 9 p.m. With everyone on scene and their equipment in place, Team 1 completed drilling all five of the tank trailer's compartments and began transferring the load. The unloading procedure took a lot longer than expected, some three and a half hours, however, the transfer was completed without further incident or loss of product.

At 12:35 a.m. Diamond Recovery received the go-ahead to start the recovery. The Diamond team then conducted a more complete and detailed survey of the casualty, taking note of any damage that might affect or impede the recovery. Jeff and his recovery team reformulated aspects of their rigging to overcome obstacles created due to the compromised structural integrity of the power unit and damage to the fifth wheel. A brief meeting was held to confirm the method with which they intended to deploy for the recovery. With the fire services standing close by, Jeff's first step was to disconnect the batteries. Then two 12-foot Torry chains were attached to the boom head on the rotator and terminated on the driver's side of the frame rails. The two winch lines were then secured to the opposite side of the frame rails with two 6-foot Torry chains. The chassis

was then picked off of the cab and held level while the air lines and wiring harnesses were disconnected, freeing the cab completely. Next the fifth wheel and chassis were disconnected from the tank trailer and rotated away from the trailer, righted in mid air and loaded onto the low-boy trailer. Then the cab was rigged, lifted out of the ditch, uprighted, loaded, and secured on the deck of Dean's flatbed deck for transport.

The time was now 1:30 a.m. Dan Prentice positioned his wrecker on the far side of the median, on the southbound inside shoulder. With the 7035 wrecker, he began to winch the trailer into the embankment, slowly turning it so they could gain access to the bulkhead hatches. With the ties just touching the embankment, Dan stopped winching and held the trailer while Team 1 opened the tankers' hatches and vacuumed



The fifth wheel and chassis are disconnected from the tank trailer and rotated away from the trailer, righted in mid-air and loaded onto the lowboy trailer.





The cab is loaded and secured on the deck of Dean's flatbed for transport.

out the remaining fuel. Jeff then made the decision not to use chains in recovering this tank trailer. Instead, he opted for 20,000-pound Kevlar recovery straps and hardwood 4 x 6 timbers to reduce any further source of ignition. The 4 x 6 timbers were chocked using the 20,000-pound straps and inserted into four bulkhead hatches. With the rotator in position, the winch lines were then attached to the Kevlar straps. Jeff then uprighted the tank trailer, vertically lifted it and rotated it back onto the roadway in one single, continuous motion. The tank trailer was then hooked to and made ready for transport by the 7035 wrecker.

This portion of the recovery took approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes including vacuuming the remaining gasoline from the five bulkheads. Time now was 2:40 a.m.


The Diamond Recovery Team

Jeff Martin, Dan Prentice, Dan Withy, Len Walker, Dean Demick, and Debbie Martin

All of Diamond's personnel including dispatchers are a minimum level 4-5 WreckMaster certified

All of the recovery personnel mentioned are minimum level 6-7 WreckMasters

Jeff Martin was the 2004 WreckMaster of the Year, and was named a Top Ten WreckMaster of the Year in 2002.

With the casualty removed from the scene, it was time for the hazardous materials cleanup to begin. Len Walker, a Diamond Recovery Team specialist, remained on scene for the next 16 hours working with Team 1 Emergency Services digging the spill site. The Diamond Team then returned to their terminal to clean, service, and refuel their equipment and place them back into service. 

Terry Humelsine is VP of Research and Development and a Lead Instructor for WreckMaster. Terry has over 40 years of hands-on towing and recovery experience and has the distinction of being the first WreckMaster graduate. He has earned numerous driving awards in 1985, 86, 87, and was the 1988 TRAA National Driving Champion. Co-writer of WreckMaster training manuals/videos and source materials, Terry heads up Team WreckMaster during technical and precision demonstrations.

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Pulling Together- That's A Donnie

Earning A Donnie Award Is Usually a Team Effort

by Steve Calliri

What the late Donnie Cruse brought to our industry's approach to recovery was "discipline." He exuded the meaning of the word in speeches he made to towing groups as well as in small talk to friends. He couldn't stand anyone's acceptance of laziness or mediocrity. Once he got down on the floor in front of me to show off his ability to do one-arm pushups. He was big on pushing the envelope.

The "discipline" he brought to towing went beyond an attitude, however. Cruse systematized how a professional should approach and perform any given recovery. While each job would be different, to be sure, there were common dynamics to all recoveries, as he saw it. With that philosophy he created the WreckMaster "discipline" which "til this day rules the structure of all WreckMaster training classes and how one should



Donnie Cruse in the classroom.

approach a recovery.

Cruse loved to instruct and was a natural before groups large and small. Creating an award for recovery performance excellence was a natural extension of his impact on this industry. After all, there were over 10,000 towers who had been trained by the WreckMaster organization by the time of his death. The award in a very real sense is a call from Donnie to be proud about their work.

Every year towing and recovery specialists are encouraged to submit photos and text

description of a challenging recovery they successfully performed. The Donnie is awarded for light-, medium-, and heavy-duty applications if the challenge and performance match up to the standards of excellence that Cruse was known for. NRC Industries has sponsored the awards for five straight years.

Last year there was no medium-duty recovery submitted that measured up to those standards so no award was given in that class. In another year past there was no light-duty award for the same reason.

"We do not want to be giving out the Donnie for the sake of giving out an award," said Justin Cruse, president of WreckMaster today. The Donnie is a standard of excellence. The purpose of the award is to promote excellence in recovery performance.

The WreckMaster discipline is a no-nonsense approach, according to one certified WreckMaster trained in the week-long curriculum. To this tower, the discipline is about calculating the weight of the vehicle, factoring in any resistance, such as a muddy terrain or a hill. Then using the appropriate tools correctly.

"Most people practice recovery by trial and error. Some won't admit it, but it's a fact. The WreckMaster discipline takes the guesswork out of recovery."

The Donnie Cruse Memorial Recovery Awards were created a year after Donnie, his wife Mary Helen, daughter Shannon, and granddaughter Shanaya, were killed senselessly by a crazed tower. The killing left his son, Justin, and brother Ken, in charge of the WreckMaster training organization, and thousands of towing professionals who had been trained by WreckMaster, a few thousand by Donnie himself, grieving.

His classes taught excellence. His discipline continues in the teaching regardless of who the instructor is. His death spawned the award which continually raises the bar for recovery excellence.

When Jeff Martin of Diamond Towing & Float Service in Bolton, Ontario, won the Donnie last year in the heavy-duty class, he was moved. "I can't put it into words," he said.

Martin credited the entire Dia-

mond team who worked the award winning recovery. "It may not have been the most difficult recovery we have ever done, but it was beautiful for our teamwork. We formulated how we would go about the job and then we did it, quietly working together, each of us doing our part."

Martin, a certified 6,7,8 WreckMaster took his first WreckMaster training class back in 1998. "I compare Donnie to Tony Robbins, the motivational speaker. Donnie made you feel proud to be a tower. The way he talked about towing and recovery was very inspiring."

This writer had the opportunity to see and hear Donnie speak on several occasions. There was nothing plastic or rote about his delivery. He captivated his audience by first captivating himself with his thoughts. His talks seemed to flow off the cuff with a passionate intensity. He spoke before a big crowd much the same way he would speak before one or two people. He was genuine. And people sensed that when he spoke.

Learning From The Master

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"My Dad was an educator, and fortunately I was blessed with a front row seat," said Justin Cruse, president of WreckMaster today. "The first WreckMaster class I attended was in 1998, my Dad was the instructor, and I was overwhelmed by his teaching style. My Dad didn't go to university and he didn't graduate from college. But that didn't stop him from living up to his potential. He had charisma and he inspired people to succeed."

"My father was very passionate about many things, especially heavy recovery equipment. I could see the fire in his eye when we arrived at a training class and a 40- or 50-ton wrecker was available for our use. One image in particular will be forever burned in my mind: the time I saw him operate the W70 standing between the massive booms, one leg propped up on the mast, and that look of confidence and determination on his face. As I stood below I realized he lived for this."

Donnie's only brother, Ken, remembers the first recovery. "The year was 1973 when we received the call that there was a major

wreck and we needed to respond. We rolled our heavies. Donnie was first on scene. Wow! What a smile he had on his face. How he took charge, placing the units where they would do their work. In a very short time we were back to our shop and, with our trucks put away. To this day it's still fresh in my mind how he excelled in recovery."

California Towman Jay Beglinger, of East Bay Tow in Berkeley, Ca., winner of the 2006 Donnie in the light-duty class

Donnie Cruse. "Donnie was a unitar," said Beglinger. "He had a vision of uniting the industry through sharing experience and knowledge. I think of the Donnie Award in the same vein—it's helping to unite our industry. For me, this was a group award; it's for the other two men on the team who did the recovery with me. It's recognizing the teamwork that went into the job."

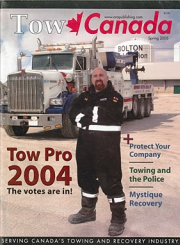
As a recovery specialist and instructor, Cruse was the real deal. Today, when the car or truck is the ditch, down a ravine, or pitched into a body of water, the tow operator(s) may be thinking, "This one might be a Donnie!"

Editor's note: Getting recognition for you or your recovery team is good for the team, and good for the industry. Send your recovery photos and a step-by-step description of the recovery to Donnie Awards, American Towman Magazine, 7 West Street, Warwick, NY, 10990



Jay Beglinger, of East Bay Tow in Berkeley, Ca., winner of the 2006 Donnie in the light-duty class





TOP

Tow Pro 2004

We found him. Our 2004 Tow Pro, Jeff Martin, embodies the values we cherish most.

Choosing Tow Canada's Tow Pro of the Year was difficult as ever. Community service, acts of heroism, commitment to training, dedication to the industry—this year's nominees had it all. In several cases, we received multiple nomination letters for the same individual. We were pleased with this response, although it made our job that much harder. Aside from our selected Tow Pro, we learned about a number of remarkable towers who would make fine subjects for future Tow Canada stories. Nominators, if your candidate was not selected, don't be discouraged. We'll be following up with a number of you to either turn your nomination letter into an article or to nominate your candidate again next year.

This year, we are pleased to announce Jeff Martin, the manager of operations at Diamond Towing and Float Service Inc., in Bolton, Ontario, as Canada's Top Tow Pro of 2004. Jeff is on call 24-hours a day, operating Diamond's forty-ton slider restorer, "The King of Diamonds." We received no less than four nomination letters for Mr. Martin: one from his wife, Debbie Martin; Lori Colwill, president of Diamond Towing; Don Burr, P.T.A.O. Tow Show chairman; and Ken Cruise, WreckMaster CEO. Nominators included pictures, newspaper articles, details about Mr. Martin's community service, and a list of his awards, accomplishments and credentials. No effort was spared.



Jeff Martin and his wife Debbie.

To honour Mr. Martin, we'll show you what his nominators had to say; but first, we'll give our new Tow Pro the opportunity to voice his own opinion about the job, the people, and the industry.

How did you become a towman?

I became a towman strictly by accident. Like many others in this industry, I applied for the job simply because there was an opening and I needed work, never intending for it to become a career. I had heard others say, "It gets in your blood!" but I didn't fully understand it until it happened to me. Now, I not only view this industry as a career, but I could not imagine doing anything else. I am very fortunate to have never worked for anyone I didn't like, as well as respect. I truly enjoy coming to work every day.

What appeals to you about the job/industry/people?

I like the fact that you can step back and immediately see the fruits of your labour. I like the challenges involved with recovery work, and figuring the job out from start to finish so the wreckers are not constantly being moved throughout the job. A recovery is done well when there is as little impact on traffic as possible, no secondary damage, and everything flows together to make it look as easy as possible. But what I like the most about the job is the friend-



Jeff Martin and the crew of Diamond Towing & Float Services Inc.

His ethics and integrity are an integral part of his personality, and those of us who work with him on a daily basis appreciate his straightforward, honest approach when dealing with situations. — Lori Colwill, President, Diamond Towing

ships I've developed by getting to work with so many good people over the years.

What are some of the greatest challenges/issues/problems that you think towers and towing businesses face?

I find one of the biggest problems these days is billing practices. What is a fair method of billing on a large job? I do not agree with billing hourly. These days rapid road clearance has become very important, almost the latest buzzword. To do work for cities or police departments you have to work fast. To get the job done right you need training, the best equipment you can afford, as well as other non-ancillary equipment such as forklifts,

skid-steers, air bags, and Haz-Mat units. This all costs money, but more so it allows a good recovery team to do the job in a quarter of the time. So, if you are billing hourly, you're spending three times the money and making a quarter of the income. Some companies have gotten in the habit of just sending the entire fleet to a crash regardless of what is needed. How is this an acceptable practice? In my opinion, the easiest solution is billing by the pound. This method of billing does not punish you for having the equipment and training to finish a job faster than your competitors. A job is worth the same amount of money whether you are quick or slow, and no matter where you do it. I believe it is a fair billing system and harder to abuse than the hourly system.

His solid accomplishments coupled with his selfless contribution to improving the towing industry are why I believe that Jeff Martin should be Top Tow Pro 2004. — Debbie Martin, Diamond Towing

Do you see any current or future towing industry trends that you would like to point out or advocate?

More and more companies are looking to outsource their training. This is a trend that I believe will strengthen this industry, and make it easier to be recognized as a legitimate emergency service provider.

Last year alone Jeff was on the scene of over 100 incidents.



Jeff doesn't shy away from buying the best equipment and acquiring the best training.



What are the qualities you would look for in a Tow Pro?

A professional tow operator is someone who is always looking to improve him or her self in all aspects of the business. It is also someone willing to take the extra steps to help someone else regardless of the name on the door. A Tow Pro is an asset to his employer or employees, always.

Who do you consider industry role models?

I consider guys like Donnie and Kenny Cruise role models in this industry—men who saw a need, took a chance, and persevered. I look up to guys like Terry Hurnchinski and Randy Bishle, who gave up successful businesses to train others. I look up to some company owners who invest their time any money to provide guys like me with a job. And I look up to the people under me who work hard to make me look good.

What kind of people do you like to work with?

I like to work with people who are professional and have the same level of training and experience that I have. I had the pleasure of up-righting a dump truck that had rolled into a basement with Luc Migneault and Brian Crane. We were at training at First Towing's pound when John Walsh received the call. He asked me to handle it, with Luc and Brian offering to help. How could I say no? After arriving and forming a plan, the truck was righted and removed from the basement in under 20 minutes. We did this without stopping for discussion and without ever having worked together before. Working with these former WreckMaster of the Year recipients was one of the highlights of my career. When you all have the same training, you are all on the same page and everything looks easy.

What do you think you are like to work with?

At Diamond Towing I am employed as both the operations manager and first truck dispatched to a heavy incident. On a recovery scene, I believe at times I can be difficult to work with because of my high level of expectations. Every member of our team is a trained and certified operator and is expected to conduct him or her self as such. When we plan our

work, everyone on scene is given specific tasks that need to be carried out in a timely fashion. Quite often there is no time for idle chitchat, so to some it may seem as though we do not get along. In the office we move at a slower pace, taking time to discuss everybody's different ideas. We have a family atmosphere, and we often spend time away from work together meeting for dinners or catching a hockey game.

How does being a tow operator affect your family?

I am one of the sowers lucky enough to find a soul mate that understands the amount of time a tow operator is away from home. She chose to come and work for Diamond Towing and First Services Inc. so we would be able to spend more time together. She is now the first female level 6/7 A WreckMaster in Canada and a very important part of our recovery team, heading up our spills division. (P.S. My dog and cat seem to be unaffected.)

Is there anyone you would like to acknowledge?

I would like to thank my wife, Debbie, for all the support she has given me over the years, and for all the time lost while I was out towing. I would also like to thank Greg Pannia and Lori Colwell Pannia, the owners of Diamond Towing for the opportunity to work here, and for having the faith to put me in the position I'm in.

Turn the page to find out what the nominators had to say about this year's Tow Pro.

Jeff and WreckMaster instructor Terry.



What the nominators had to say about 2004's Top Tow Pro:

If I had a vote, it would have to go to Jeff Martin. He has helped more tow operators than anyone, and I am saying he does this for free. He just wants this industry to be better than it is, and that is to say nothing of this man's great skill at towing or doing a recovery.

Ken Cruise, CEO, WreckMaster

We are extremely fortunate to have Jeff Martin as operations manager of our towing and recovery division. Not only is Jeff committed to improving standards within the industry by working closely with the WreckMaster organization, he is always looking for ways to "raise the bar" in every aspect of the towing community. His ethics and integrity are an integral part of his personality, and those of us who work with him on a daily basis appreciate his straightforward, honest approach when dealing with situations. Jeff is able to draw on his imagination and years of experience to find creative ways to solve the most complicated recovery problems quickly and efficiently. All drivers who work with Jeff appreciate his generous nature and his sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Lori Colwell, President, Diamond Towing

Jeff is a prime example of what a towing professional should be. Jeff has been an asset to his employer and has contributed in many capacities to the company's overall success and growth over the years. Always striving to be "better" himself, he was awarded WreckMaster of the year at this year's Baltimore Tow Show for his efforts. Not only has Jeff poured himself into his work, he has dragged his significant other with him. Deb recently became the first Canadian girl to be 6-7A WreckMaster certified at the weekend course they recently attended in Fayetteville. Congrats Deb, no biggy for Jeff though, I believe it was about his ninth time. These two are truly a team in every sense of the word.

All you have to do is ask, and Jeff is quick to do whatever he can to assist you. His contributions to industry, community and charity events are too numerous to mention. In recent years, he has repeatedly committed himself and the staff at Diamond Towing (Ilkott) to the Ontario Tow Show. He is eager to teach anything to anyone who is willing to listen and is happy to show you again without divulging too many trade secrets. Jeff's professionalism and enthusiasm are apparent as soon as you meet him, and it is always a pleasure to have him on your team.

Don Burt, P.T.A.O. Tow Show Chairman

There are so many reasons why I believe Jeff deserves this honor. Jeff spends his "spare" time sitting in on WreckMaster classes, and attending every class within a 5-hour drive just

to give back a little of what he has received. He is proud that his fellow operators have named him "Student of the Class" at every level of WreckMaster. In October 2002, he earned the classification as one of WreckMaster's top ten. In 2004 he was awarded WreckMaster of the Year for his contributions and leadership. To date, Jeff is a level 6/7 AH WreckMaster, and one day he would like to become a field instructor.

Last year alone Jeff responded as incident commander/heavy recovery operator to over 100 incidents for Diamond Towing. Jeff has elevated Diamond Towing into a well-respected, profitable company serving southern Ontario and the U.S. However, Jeff takes little credit for himself; he attributes the success of the business to the fact that he works for wonderful people, Greg Pannia and Lori Colwell, and to having a great team of tow operators.

In addition to WreckMaster training, Jeff is certified by the PTA as a towing and recovery specialist. He is a certified Haz-Mat responder by the STTS, and Team-1 Emergency Services. He has his TDG, Brake Adjustment, Articulating Boom Licenses, First Aid and CPR Certificates. Jeff insists on purchasing the best equipment and acquiring the best training. He has sacrificed his personal time and resources in order to maintain his high-level professional ethic over the years, simply because he feels that it is the right thing to do.

Jeff's dedication to the industry is second only to his devotion to our family and the communities in which we live and work. He believes that if a company profits in a community, then the company is obliged to give back to that community. Jeff has implemented the policy at Diamond Towing that provides towing services free of charge to non-profit organizations and youth groups. He often drives floats for parades or towing equipment himself so that volunteer activities do not interfere with his operator's time off. Jeff also supports the provincial tow association by volunteering his time to the annual show in the Heavy and Light Duty Challenges.

Recently I asked Jeff why he continues to operate a tow truck. Why does he go out day after day to face inclement weather, or why he takes calls at 3:00 a.m. from tow operators needing assistance on a difficult call when he himself just finished working at 2:00 a.m.? Jeff's reply "....because it is the best job in the world!" Everyone who knows Jeff is aware that he eats, sleeps and breathes towing and recovery.

Debbie Martin, Diamond Towing





TRUCK SPILL: Several Caledon OPP officers and Diamond Towing operators were kept busy the morning of Friday, October 19, after a waste removal vehicle slid into a ditch after making a right hand turn off of Martha Street in Bolton. The 37-year-old driver from Whitby was not injured during

the mishap, however, some of the rotten food he'd been hauling seeped into the ditch at the corner of Martha and Queen Street. Hydro One was called to repair a slightly damaged hydro pole and the mess was eventually cleaned up.

ROBYN WILKINSON PHOTO

Ontario
Provincial
Police

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de l'Ontario



Caledon Detachment

6211 Old Church Road
Caledon East, ON L7C 1J7

Telephone: (905) 584-2241
Fax: (905) 584-2188

26 June 2008

File:

Mr and Mrs. Greg and Lori Pannia
Mr. Jeff Martin
159 Industrial Rd.
Bolton, Ontario
L7E 1K5

Re: Fatal Crash Regional Rd. 50
Jun 13, 2008

Dear Greg, Lori and Jeff,

I want to extend to you our deep thanks for the actions of your staff during the investigation and subsequent removal of the commercial motor vehicles involved in this tragic collision. If you will recall in the afternoon hours of Friday June 13th a large commercial garbage truck slammed into the back of another commercial van waiting to make a turn on the George Bolton Parkway.

Early in your operations were there, ready and willing to assist with the rescue of the driver of the truck. When it became apparent that rescue would not be possible, your operators moved back out of the scene.

I understand that into the evening hours not only did your operators assist in moving the trucks in order to remove Mr. Santos in a dignified manner they allowed our officers and MTO inspectors to use your facility to perform this operation. In addition our officers were allowed entry to use the facilities, and provided with pop, water and pizza.

We at the Caledon OPP are very grateful for the assistance, and the nourishment provided to our officers on the 13th of June. The opportunity gave us the time to conduct a thorough investigation, without the added pressures of keeping the highway closed.

Most importantly, we were also able to provide some measure of dignity to Mr. Santos and his family.

You should be proud of your members, and once again, thank you from all of us here at Caledon OPP.


Nicol Randall #9006
A/S/Sgt.
Caledon OPP



As Mayor of the Town of Caledon , Fire Chief and on behalf of the Members of Council, it is our pleasure to commend,

*Greg & Lori Pannia
Diamond Recovery Services*

in recognition of your ongoing assistance and support of firefighter vehicle rescue training programs in the Town of Caledon.

Your support has contributed to the continuing excellence in the delivery of public fire protection for our residents. We truly appreciate your assistance.

With warm regards,

Mayor Marolyn Morrison

Fire Chief Brad Bigrigg





Town of Caledon

Fire & Emergency Services

Incident # 8020940

Date: June 13, 2008

Time: 13:20 Hours

Location: Regional Rd. 50 at George Bolton Parkway (Bolton Fire District)

Incident: Fatal MVC

Narrative: On Friday June 13, 2008 at approximately 1:20 pm., Caledon Fire & Emergency Services was dispatched to a report of a serious motor vehicle collision at the intersection of Regional Rd. 50 at George Bolton Parkway. Upon arrival Caledon Firefighters found that a large waste disposal truck had rear ended a tractor trailer combination in the north bound lanes.

The driver of the waste disposal truck was seriously trapped and critically injured. Due to the nature of the entrapment additional assistance was requested from the City of Brampton Fire & Emergency Services. The driver of the waste disposal truck was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Caledon Fire crews assisted Caledon OPP at the scene for several hours. The recovery of the driver of the waste disposal truck was a long and complex process requiring the skills and equipment from Caledon Fire & Emergency Services along with the technical expertise and heavy equipment supplied by Diamond Towing & Recovery Services from Bolton. The recovery was complete at 8:23 pm.

Investigation: The Incident is under investigation by OPP

Agencies: Bolton, Caledon East, and Palgrave Fire Stations, Peel EMS, and Caledon OPP

Brad Bigrigg

Fire Chief

Community Emergency Management Coordinator



This school bus was struck by a dump truck at the intersection of King Street and the Caledon-King Town Line Monday afternoon. The nine students on board suffered only minor injuries and were evacuated through the rear door. Charges are pending against the driver of the dump truck.

Photos by Mark Pavillons

Truck smashes bus injuring 9 students

By **Mark Pavillons**
Perspectives

Few injuries resulted Monday afternoon outside of Bolton when a bus carrying high school students was struck and rolled onto its side.

Caledon OPP and emergency services personnel responded to the collision at about 2:55 p.m. at the intersection of King Street and the Caledon-King Town Line.

Police report a dump truck carrying asphalt was heading west on King and as it turned right within the intersection, struck a southbound school bus, causing the bus to roll onto its side. The dump truck then veered off into the north-west ditch.

Constable Linda Kennedy, OPP media relations officer, said there were nine students on the bus who suffered

mostly cut lips, bloody noses and scrapes. The driver, a 63-year-old Adajala woman, was securely buckled in and wasn't injured. She did have to be freed from her seatbelt, though. The dump truck driver was also uninjured.

The students, from Robert F. Hall secondary school in Caledon East, were evacuated through the rear door of the bus and they were treated by

ambulance personnel on scene. None were taken to hospital. Alternate transportation for students was arranged and their parents were contacted.

OPP said charges are pending against the truck driver, a 33-year-old Toronto man.

Any witnesses are asked to contact the investigating officer, Constable D. Smith, at 905-857-3304.



A 36-year-old Mississauga man died after his truck hit a tractor-trailer waiting to make a turn on Regional Road 50 Friday afternoon.

Photo by Travis Persaud

Driver killed in collision

By Travis Persaud
Perspectives

Police are currently investigating a fatal collision that claimed the life of a Mississauga man on Regional Road 50 in Bolton Friday afternoon.

Carlos Santos, 36, died after his disposal truck rear-ended a stopped tractor-trailer waiting to make a left-hand turn onto George Bolton Parkway, around 1:30 p.m. on June 13.

"The investigation is continuing," OPP Constable Linda Kennedy said. "The collision reconstructionist is looking into the scene, drivers and vehicles involved for whatever causes we can find."

Kennedy said this process could take up to several months.

The driver of the tractor-trailer, Bruce Myerscough, 53, of Cambridge was not injured.

So far no charges have been laid.

"From what we can tell the truck driver who was first in line waiting to make the left-hand turn was driving properly and wasn't in violation of any traffic acts," Kennedy said. "So it's finding out why this other truck ran into the back of the stopped truck."

Police re-opened 50 at 8 p.m. that evening, after hours of rush hour traffic chaos.

Witnesses are asked to contact OPP Constable Tigera Turner at 905-857-3304.

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Small advertisement for Nicholas Lacroce, a business coach. It includes a photo of him, a testimonial from a client, and contact information: (416) 410-2880, website www.nicholaslacroce.com, and email nlacroce@tpebnet.com. The tagline is "Higher Standards, Agents, Higher Results".

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Wednesday, June 4, 2008

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Minor injuries suffered in latest bus crash

BY ROBYN WILKINSON
ENTERPRISE STAFF

An afternoon bus ride to their Bolton homes turned into a frightening event for a group of Robert F. Hall students and their bus driver, following a collision with a dump truck Monday.

The 3 p.m. accident in the intersection of King Street and Caledon King Townline is the second bus accident involving students in the past week.

Last Thursday, May 29, a Brampton man was seriously injured after being ejected from his vehicle following a collision with a school bus at The Gore Road and Healey Road. A 13-year-old Caledon boy on that bus was not injured. (see separate story page 3)

During Monday's incident, the bus being operated by a 63-year-old Adjala Tsonoronto Township woman collided with a dump truck, causing the bus to roll onto its side and the dump truck to come to a rest on a grassy area on the west side of Caledon King Townline. The bus was travelling south on Caledon King Townline and the dump truck, hauling a full load of asphalt, was heading west on King Street.

"It didn't roll completely over, it toppled onto its side," Constable Linda Kennedy told The Enterprise of the bus sitting in the middle of the intersection. Luckily only minor injuries were reported among the nine students who were shaken up, but did not require hospitaliza-



Police, fire and ambulance crews were all called to the scene of a Monday afternoon collision between a dump truck (seen at left) and a school bus, which sent the bus tipping onto its side in the middle of the King Street and Caledon King Townline intersection. No one was seriously injured, but nine high school students in the bus received minor injuries.

ROBYN WILKINSON PHOTO

tion, police said.

"The students received only minor injuries, bloody noses and bumps and bruises," Kennedy said of the teens who were treated at the scene by paramedics and firefighters.

"I was speaking to some of them and they seemed pretty calm, but I'm sure after what had happened sunk in, they would have some thoughts on how serious it could have been."

After the bus turned onto its side,

throwing some of the Grade 9 through 12 students from their seats, they were forced to exit the bus through the back emergency doors, but not before trying to free the driver, who was trapped in her seat.

"She was suspended in air in her seatbelt," the media officer said of the driver who was not injured. "They weren't able to get her out, but once fire (service) was on scene they managed to free her."

Area roads were closed down to traffic, including the Albion Vaughan Townline. One woman at a roadblock said she was trying to get to her niece who was onboard the bus. "She called me and she was crying and she was so scared," the woman said. The two were later reunited at the scene.

"It could have been so different," Kennedy said of the accident which garnered a lot of attention from

See CHARGES PENDING page 3

School bus and dump truck

Major accident in Bolton leaves students with minor injuries

By David Anderson
and Bill Rea

Students were able to walk away from their damaged school bus with only minor injuries Monday after a collision with a dump truck.

The accident happened in the intersection of King Road and Caledon-King Town Line around 2:55 p.m., Caledon OPP Constable Linda Kennedy reported.

"Their sides hit each other," she commented. "The bus was knocked onto its side and the truck came to a screeching stop off onto a dirt patch."

Caledon Fire and Emergency Services and OPP managed to get everyone off the bus safely.

"After everyone was off the bus, we did a complete perimeter search to make sure no one else was left behind," Kennedy reported.

student at Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School in Caledon East, said the dump truck tried to avoid the bus but couldn't. The impact spun the bus around causing it to fall onto its side.

"I hit my face up against one of the windows cracking my bottom lip open," she said. "It's wasn't too deep but it bled for awhile."

Natale said as she was exiting from the emergency doors on the back of the bus with the rest of the students she heard a voice crying for help at the front. The voice turned out to belong to the driver.

"I tried to help her. I got her seatbelt undone but she was too heavy for me to help her up onto her feet by myself," commented Natale. "I cried out for one of the boys to come back and help

me."

She added all that mattered was that no one was seriously hurt.

"It could have been worse, someone could have been killed or in the hospital," said Natale.

Kennedy agreed.

"These school buses are so safe," she declared. "They're designed to protect the students in collision without the use of seatbelts."

Firefighters from Bolton who responded to the scene also expressed relief.

District Chief Darryl Bailey observed there was potential for serious injuries. "Thank God there appears to be relatively minor injuries," he commented.

The driver of the dump truck, a 33-year-old man from Brampton, was charged with dangerous operation of a motor vehicle.



There were only minor injuries Monday afternoon after this school bus was in a collision with a dump truck at the intersection of King Street and the Caledon — King Town Line.

Photo by Bill Rea

Isabella Natale, 14, a



**In appreciation of your support of the
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Diamond Towing

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "D. Morrison", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Daryl Morrison, ReStore Manager

June 25th, 2008

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Held on June 3, 2008 at Glen Eagle Golf Club

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Students witness auto extrication

BY ROBYN WILKINSON

Students eagerly looked on from behind yellow emergency tape as members of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services performed a mock auto-extrication Friday morning at the Humberview School.

To celebrate the last day of education week, Humberview auto teachers, Mr. Ivinson and Mr. Vandenberg organized the event to give students the opportunity to view what happens during serious auto collisions.

Four firefighters worked together to show students what happens on a routine vehicle extrication that Darryl Bailey, captain at the Bolton station of Fire and Emergency Services, says usually takes between 20 and 25 minutes. They began by breaking all the windows of a donated vehicle painted black, yellow and red by students,

followed by one of the laws of Life to cut the driver's side door off where a trapped passenger would be. Eighteen-year-old David Chamberlain, Humberview and co-op student at the Caledon Fire department, had the chance to witness his first vehicle extrication during the demonstration. Chamberlain says he hasn't performed an extrication yet, but says he will be involved in one before his placement is finished. Ivinson thanks the many parents and members of the community who have donated cars over the years to the programme for students to work on.

"Without these cars, we wouldn't be able to run such a dynamic course," he said. He would also like to thank Diamond Towing for providing on-going support in the form of towing services.



Caledon firefighters performed a mock vehicle extrication Friday at The Humberview School in Bolton. Students watched in excitement as the glass of a donated vehicle was smashed and the metal frame was cut through by firefighters.

ROBYN WILKINSON PHOTO

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Wednesday, June 18, 2008

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Truck crash in Bolton claims driver's life

BY ROBYN WILKINSON
ENTERPRISE STAFF

An afternoon truck crash in Bolton last Friday has left a 36-year-old Mississauga man dead.

Caledon police are still piecing together how the accident occurred, but what is clear is that a disposal truck being operated by a Mississauga man slammed into a stopped transport truck on Regional Road 50 and George Bolton Parkway.

The accident occurred shortly after 1 p.m. June 13, while a northbound transport truck driven by a 55-year-old Cambridge man, had been stopped in the left-hand turn lane, waiting to turn onto George Bolton Parkway.

Caledon Fire and Emergency Services and Peel EMS responded to the accident, where they found the driver of the disposal truck trapped and critically injured.

Additional assistance was called in from Brampton Fire and Emergency Services, as well as equipment from Diamond Towing and Recovery Services. The Mississauga man was later pronounced dead at the scene.

"He was stopped and rear-ended," OPP Constable Linda

See MANY FACTORS page 5



Traffic was snafled for hours in south Bolton after two large trucks collided in the intersection of Regional Road 50 and George Bolton Parkway early Friday afternoon. Fire and ambulance personnel were called to the scene, where one trapped driver received critical injuries and died. The entire section of busy Regional Road 50 was cordoned off by Caledon OPP until 8 p.m. that evening.

HARVEY MCKINZIE

Charges are pending against truck driver

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
passerby. "We're so fortunate everyone was able to come out without being seriously injured."

Diamond Towing was called in to remove the vehicles and the roads were reopened to traffic around 5 p.m.

An OPP Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspector's preliminary report indicated some deficiencies with the dump truck. The driver, Austin Onyekwulune, 33, of Brampton, has been charged with the criminal offence of dangerous operation of a motor

vehicle. He will appear in court on July 24. Charges are pending against the owner of the dump truck, however, further details were not provided.

Any witnesses to the crash are asked to contact Constable Smith at (905) 857-3304.



Monday afternoon's collision between a school bus and a dump truck, resulting in the bus, carrying Robert F. Hall students home to Bolton, flipping on its side. The students escaped from the back emergency door, after trying to rescue their driver, trapped in her seat belt.

SCOTT WILKINSON PHOTO



Members of the Hambleton Red Rooster football field hockey team are enjoying March Break in Great Britain with friendly matches in England and Scotland. Prior to take-off Krysta Robinson, Samantha Hatton and Michelle van Walraven accepted a donation from Diamond Towing and Fleet Services Inc. on Industrial Road in



FIRE THANK YOU: Caledon Fire Chief Brad Bigg and Mayor Marilyn Morrison presented Greg and Lori Pannella (above, centre), owners of Diamond Towing, and Greg Zwetsloot (below, centre), vice president of James Dick Construction, with framed certificates thanking them for providing facilities and assistance, allowing local firefighters to complete training required for the Company Officer Programme.

JOAN WATSON FORBES PHOTO

Driver seriously hurt in bus crash

BY HEATHER ABBY
SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE

A school bus and pickup truck collided at the intersection of The Gore and Healey Roads on Thursday, May 29 at approximately 3:45 p.m., resulting in serious injuries to one driver.

The driver of the pickup truck, a 52-year-old man from Brampton, suffered life-threatening injuries and was airlifted to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre after his

truck, headed eastbound on Healey Road, collided with a school bus headed northbound on The Gore Road. The man was ejected from his vehicle through the passenger side door.

Aboard the bus at the time of the accident was the 71-year-old male driver and a 13-year-old boy from Caledon. Neither were injured, said police.

The Stock Transportation school bus left the roadway,

crossed the ditch and came to rest on the side lawn of a property located on the northeast corner of the intersection, knocking down live hydro wires that came to rest on the roof of the vehicle.

The truck skidded north on The Gore and came to rest in the east ditch approximately 400 feet north of the intersection.

Any witnesses are asked to call investigating officer Paul Beaton at (905) 854-2241.

Fatal collision on Highway 50 in Bolton Friday

Caledon OPP and OPP technical collision investigators are continuing their investigation of a collision on Highway 50 at George Bolton Parkway in Bolton Friday, which claimed the life of a Mississauga man.

A northbound tractor-trailer was stopped in the left lane of at the intersection waiting to make a left turn on to George Bolton. Police report a second vehicle, a waste disposal truck, was also northbound and collided into the rear of the stopped transport trailer.

The driver of the disposal truck, 36-year-old Carlos Santos of Mississauga, was pronounced dead at the scene of the collision.

The driver of the tractor-trailer, 53-year-old Bruce Myerscough of Cambridge, was not injured.

Caledon Fire and Emergency Services arrived at the scene at about 1:20 p.m. Due to the nature of the entrapment, additional assistance was requested from Brampton.

Fire crews assisted OPP at the scene for several hours, leaving at 8:23 p.m. They reported the recovery operation was a long and

complex process requiring the skills and equipment from Caledon Fire and Emergency Services, along with the technical expertise and heavy equipment supplied by Diamond Towing

and Recovery Services from Bolton.

The investigation is continuing. Any witnesses to the collision are asked to contact Const. Tigera Turner at (905) 857-3304.



Crews spent hours Friday dealing with this accident on highway 50 in Bolton, which claimed the life of a Mississauga man.

Photo by Jan Yaneff