

Lac-Mégantic, Quebec Devastated By Rail Disaster

Scott Steele July 06, 2013



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Distraught mayor of Lac-Mégantic, Colette Roy-Laroche, stated “The town center is devastated. A number of homes have also been affected.” ‘It’s terrible. We’ve never seen anything like it. We have deployed all resources to ensure that we can support our citizens,’ she said.

(Newswire.net -- July 06, 2013) Calgary, AB -- An unmanned crude oil railcar derailed in downtown Lac-Mégantic early Saturday morning. A company spokesman explained the conductor of the train had locked the brakes and ensured they were safely secured. Somehow they came

undone and the crude oil railcars rolled away and ran off the tracks and exploded into flames. The huge fireball of flames quickly spread to additional cars loaded with crude oil.

A spokesman explained that the conductor was not at the scene at the time of the train derailment and explosion as he had left for the night to stay in a nearby hotel in Lac Mégantic.

"Sometime after, the train got loose," said Joseph R. McGonigle, vice president of marketing for The Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway. "It traveled under its own inertia to the centre of the town."

McGonigle said that the locomotive part of the train was detached half a mile out of town but the crude oil tanker cars rolled into the small town on their own. He stated that there are security mechanisms to prevent tampering and all of the proper procedures had been put in place.

"That's what confuses us. How did this happen?" "There are many fail-safe modes. How this happened is just beyond us." McGonigle said.

McGonigle said the company will cooperate with authorities and the further investigation into this accident.

The train is owned by Montreal Maine & Atlantic and according to their website, “The Montreal, Maine & Atlantic began operation in January of 2003 and owns over 510 route miles of track, serving customers in Maine, Vermont, Quebec and New Brunswick.”

According to the distraught mayor of Lac-Mégantic, Colette Roy-Laroche, The town center is devastated. A number of homes have also been affected. She said the emergency services are doing all they can to bring the situation under control.

'It's terrible. We've never seen anything like it. We have deployed all resources to ensure that we can support our citizens,' she said.

Approximately 60 people are still reported missing at this time.

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Sources

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