

Dead in Plane Crash Identified



Three people are confirmed dead in the crash of a small plane just south of Aurora Monday morning. The owner of the plane had loaned the craft to a friend.

The Lawrence County Sheriff's office late Monday identified the three men killed in the crash of the Piper twin-engine plane as:

*Kevin Saffold, 25, of Eagle Rock, Missouri - Saffold was seated in the front left seat of the plane

*John Shaffer, 46, of Shell Knob, Missouri - Shaffer was in the front right seat.

*Roger Jones, 30, of Fayetteville, Missouri - Jones was seated in the plane's left rear seat.

The lone survivor of the crash was Walter Blair, 37, of Allen, Texas. He was sitting in the right rear seat of the Piper.

Blair was able to crawl out of the wreckage with help from people who ran to the scene from a nearby sawmill.

Blair was described as being in serious to critical condition by emergency crews on the scene of the crash and was airlifted to a Springfield hospital.

Lt. Brad Delay with the Lawrence County Sheriff's office said the crash was reported shortly after 9:00 am just south of the Aurora Municipal Airport.

The wreckage was off Lawrence County Road 2220 near Highway 60. Delay said the crash happened shortly after the plane took off from the Aurora airport, and that the plane may have been enroute to Kentucky.

The plane, a 1965 Piper, was registered to Justin Richmond, the manager of the Aurora airport. Richmond said he had taken the plane up earlier in the morning and had no problems.

Witnesses said there were strong winds in the area Monday morning. Although the crash happened right after take-off, Delay said there did not appear to be any fire involved in the wreckage.

The Federal Aviation Administration office in Kansas City and the National Transportation Safety Administration in Chicago planned to send investigators to the scene late Monday or Tuesday.