



Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Jeff Wiley

MEDIA RELEASE

September 4, 2015

Plant incident results in 4 injuries, root cause found in hydrogen line

Ascension Parish Sheriff Jeff Wiley reports that four employees of Renewable Energy Group (REG) sustained injuries resulting from an incident on Friday, September 3 at approximately 11:00pm in Geismar.

911 emergency dispatchers received notice of an explosion on a high pressure hydrogen line. According to initial reports from REG employees, four individuals were injured. It was determined later that three contract employees sustained injuries and one REG employee was severely injured. The injured were extracted from the facility and transported to Baton Rouge General Medical Center and St. Elizabeth Hospital for care.

Based upon notification procedures, the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, Ascension Parish Office of Homeland Security, Gonzales and Geismar Fire Departments and Acadian Ambulance were all dispatched to the scene. Roadblocks were established at Highway 30 and Industrial, Highway 73 and Highway 30, and finally Highway 73 and Highway 75. Additional protective measures included a shelter in place order at the nearby Rubicon facility and an order to cease all rail traffic in the area.

An investigation revealed that a hydrogen line under maintenance had likely become pressurized with hydrogen, resulting in a release. An unidentified source ignited the released hydrogen, resulting in the four injuries.