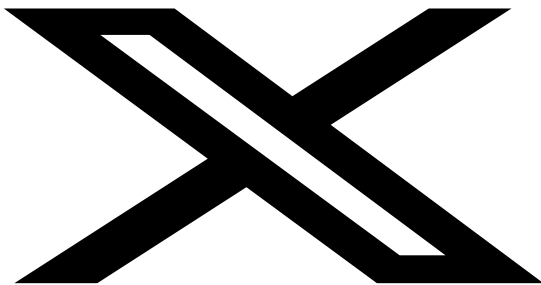


Safety Violation Mishap at Clearwater Paper Construction Project—Workers Sent Home!!! Bad Planning causes 74 By-Pass Construction Detour!!! Reports by Robert A. Williams

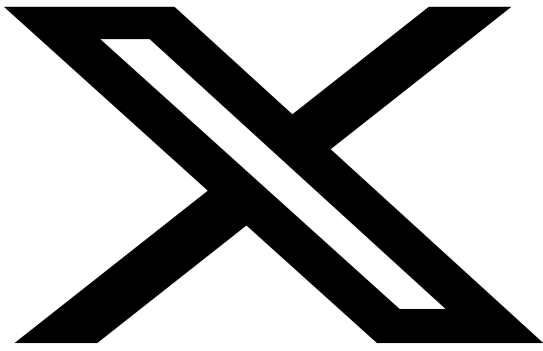
Sources report that the “Big Red Crane” being used in the Clearwater Paper Expansion construction project turned over yesterday in a major safety incident that resulted in many construction workers being sent home. There are no reports of injury or fatalities and we hope there are not any. But that would be a function of luck and not good management or good crane operating practices. There are also no reports regarding the extent of damages.



Such crane incidents are usually caused by one of two reasons.



1. Structural failures of the crane's components
2. Improper Operation when setting up the crane and lifting or moving the load.



For a large tracked construction crane to actually turn over with the counterweights sticking straight up in the air is usually an indicator of improper operation of the crane when lifting and moving a heavy load.

A first guess-timation of this crane mishap would indicate the load was successfully lifted -otherwise the crane operator would have slacked off the picking up of the load, when the crane started to tip over. However, if the load was in the air and was moving around the “arc” of the crane travel into a location away from the crane “outrigger safe support area” relative to the weight of the load, the crane would be doomed to overturning with the crane operator totally unable to compensate. Just riding out the fall would have been the operator’s only option in this scenario. Of course this is only a guess at this point, but you can be sure OSHA and other government safety groups are on the way to analyze this unfortunate situation.

I would put the odds of this mishap at 75% preventable by proper maintenance, inspections, set-up and operation of the crane. One unknown is in regard to all the rain that has fallen and whether or not “soggy ground” contributed to the mishap. I call this a “mishap” at this point instead of an accident because if the situation was preventable by good management and being careful, it was no accident; it was bound to happen .sooner or later. We will see what the safety investigators say about that.

On another front regarding the Clearwater Paper Expansion Project.

The near by construction on the Highway 74 By-Pass has taken a strange turn. Instead of paving the main drag first, before working on the off ramps, the paving priority has been modified to paving to the Washburn Switch Road Exit, then paving the exit ramp heading North toward Clearwater Paper. Sources have come forward with the answer to this riddle. The Washburn Switch Road overpass has been or will be "too low" for the big paper machines that will be installed at Clearwater Paper to pass under.

The problem here is obvious. There was a lack of attention to detail regarding the overpass height as well as a lack of communication regarding that detail. The culprit here will probably never be known. But what is known is that the inconvenience for the public with this paving detour was not taken into account nearly as much as the Clearwater Paper construction and startup schedule. Another thing that can be accurately predicted is that any extra cost to the 74 By-Pass because of this will be paid by the taxpayer and not Clearwater Paper.

If you consider these two events at and near Clearwater Paper, one conclusion must be that there are management interface issues between Clearwater Paper and the Construction Company's crane supplier as well as with Clearwater Paper and the state Department of Transportation. And, where is the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership and Commissioner Eddie Holbrook's involvement in all of this?

The reason this question needs to be asked is simple Mistakes have been made and how are the root causes for these mistakes going to be remedied? But the answers will be much more complex. And perhaps embarrassing in this election cycle for County Commissioners.

In this election cycle for County Commissioners, much has been made by Commissioner Eddie Holbrook about all the jobs Holbrook claims he has brought to Cleveland County. Other articles have clearly shown that Holbrook has taken credit for many jobs that he clearly had no input in bringing to the County. Other public information indicates for the jobs Holbrook can legitimately claim, Clearwater Paper is one of them. But at a high cost to taxpayers.

Regarding the Clearwater Paper expansion project:

Per public records the County, under Commissioner Eddie Holbrook's leadership, sold \$4.6 million in county owned property to Clearwater Paper for \$1. And that was just the start. Even though the location of Clearwater Paper was in the County Water System's territory, Holbrook saw to it that the water and sewer services would be provided by the City of Shelby. (Remember the Shelby High School's multimillion dollar Baseball Field and the muddy Home Plate at the ball field at Fallston Elementary School?) Note that the \$23 million cost of the Shelby water and sewer service extension to Clearwater Paper was supplemented by \$11.5 million in County dollars as a gift to Shelby by Commissioner Eddie Holbrook. Shelby will recover their cost through the sale of water and sewer services to Clearwater Paper over the years. Where will the County recover the \$11.5 million gift of taxdollars to Shelby by Commissioner Eddie Holbrook?

Then, the County paid for road and railroad construction to service Clearwater Paper for another \$5 million. That does not include the extra paving caused by the overpass that was too low. Or, why didn't Clearwater ship their big paper machine by railcar? Would this also require the services of the big red crane that might turn over again?

Then, again, there is the issue of the new County Fire tax increase of 75%. Clearwater Paper is also in the County Fire District, but thanks to Commissioner Holbrook, the fire

protection for Clearwater Paper will now be provided by the City of Shelby. Which took Fire taxes away from the County Fire District and gave that revenue to the City of Shelby.

If you forget about the tax rearrangement that takes future revenue away from County Water and the County Fire District, the overall cash put out by the County and the City of Shelby taxpayers as well as property tax rebates approaches \$40 million solely to the benefit of Clearwater Paper's financial bottom line.

Some, including myself, are not convinced that giving away \$40 million tax dollars to Clearwater Paper was worth it. Especially when you consider that the workers for the Clearwater Paper extension project may also have to be imported from other surrounding counties and South Carolina because Cleveland County Schools as well as Cleveland Community College have not prepared and trained students sufficiently to work at Clearwater Paper. Commissioner Eddie Holbrook says the deficiencies in the CCS and CCC Workforce Development Programs have resulted in a "crisis." Hoping that taxpayers will forget that Holbrook himself was a County Commissioner and Senior Dean at CCC while all this Workforce Development "crisis" was developing. And now Commissioner Eddie Holbrook expects voters to re-elect him for all the so called "good work" that he claims he has done.

Another point is that 12 years is the exact time a student stays in school from the First through 12th grade. Exactly the same 12 years Commissioner Eddie Holbrook has already been in office as a county commissioner. And our untrained students represent a "crisis???" Is this the same kind of crisis where the Big Red Crane is turned over at Clearwater Paper? The same kind of crisis where we build overpasses that are too low as noted above.

We are indeed in a crisis if we re-elect the same so called "leaders" that put us in the crisis to begin with.

Anyway. Just thought you voters would like to know why Cleveland County is in a crisis. A crisis that was 12 years in the making and another 12 years getting over it, even if we implemented good Workforce Development Programs this very day.