



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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UPDATED INFORMATION ON CITY OF MIDDLETOWN ACCIDENT

City of Middletown crews are continuing to test and retest air quality at the scene of a fatal accident yesterday, May 7, in which City Public Works maintenance employee Jabin Lakes died and three Middletown Firefighters were injured.

Lakes was a member of a crew doing routine sewer inspection at 2500 Oxford-State Road in Middletown when it appeared he lost consciousness and fell into the man-hole opening. Two first-responders experienced respiratory difficulties. Fire Captain Todd Wissemeier and Fire Fighter/Fire Marshall Bob Hess were transported to area hospitals and continue to show improvement. Fire Fighter Tom Allen and other employees involved in the rescue operation were treated and dismissed immediately.

A Memorial Fund for the Lakes family has been established at Chase Bank.

Ohio EPA, Hazmat teams from several districts and other fire departments helped with the emergency.

As of Saturday morning, testing was continuing. Chief Botts of the Middletown Fire Department stated that nothing has yet been ruled out as a source or type of material. It may be several days before lab results are available from tests taken on Friday.

An autopsy to be performed on Monday may aid in the discovery of the reason for the death of Mr Lakes.

Middletown City Mayor Larry Mulligan, Jr said, "We extend our heartfelt sympathy to this family in this time of tragedy. I know our City employees are stepping forward to help the family in any way they can. On behalf of the City Council, I ask that we, as a community, come together in support of the Jabin Lakes family."

According to City Manager Judy Gilleland, "We truly mourn the loss of Jabin as a member of our City family. Our hearts go out to his family and the families of our other employees injured in the incident. We offer all available city resources to help our employees and their families in times of tragedy. Our concern is also for the City staff who feel the effects of this loss. We'll be utilizing all counseling and comfort resources available."

Prior to Mr. Lakes' death, the last City of Middletown fatality in the line of duty was Police Officer Henry Brinkmeyer who died in an on-the-job auto accident on October 29, 1939.

Information, as it becomes available, is posted to the City's website at www.cityofmiddletown.org.

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