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Crews review response to pileup

Stephanie Veale
Staff writer

(February 13, 2008) — Le Ngo, who died in Sunday's 36-car pileup on Interstate 390, was extracted from her vehicle and transported from the scene within 12 minutes, said emergency medical technician James Cassin.

While the streamlined rescue didn't save Ngo's life, Cassin and other emergency personnel said at a debriefing Tuesday night that they believe the multiagency response to the crash was successful.

Those who attended the meeting at the Public Safety Training Facility on Scottsville Road hashed out response times, communication issues and other logistical aspects of the response.

"The folks in command knew what they were doing," said Tim Czapranski with Monroe County Emergency Medical Services. "They were focused, they were deliberate, and they were extremely professional."

The meeting came two days after the massive pileup Sunday afternoon on I-390 southbound between Brooks Avenue and Scottsville Road.

The first call reporting the accident came at 12:39 p.m., said Amy Forero, shift supervisor with the county's Emergency Communications Department. The first state troopers were on scene two minutes later, at 12:41 p.m., she said.

Gates Fire Chief James Harrington said in the future he would like to see the command structure at a disaster scene establish itself a little faster. It took at least 10 minutes for a management plan to take shape this time, he said.

Czapranski said he would want better communication between responders on the scene and hospital emergency rooms. On Sunday, some of the victims' families had trouble locating their injured relatives.

While Cassin said he thought Sunday's crash was the most serious Monroe County has experienced, it wasn't the first pileup on that stretch of road.

In January 1985, whiteout conditions were blamed for an 18-car chain-reaction accident on I-390, also between Brooks Avenue and Scottsville Road. A 25-year-old Irondequoit man was killed in that pileup.

That section of I-390 was described as a trouble spot even then.

"It's like that every winter," a sheriff's deputy said in an article in the *Times-Union*, Rochester's former afternoon newspaper, on Jan. 22, 1985. "The wind blows across from the runway and across that dip in the road. ... It's bad in

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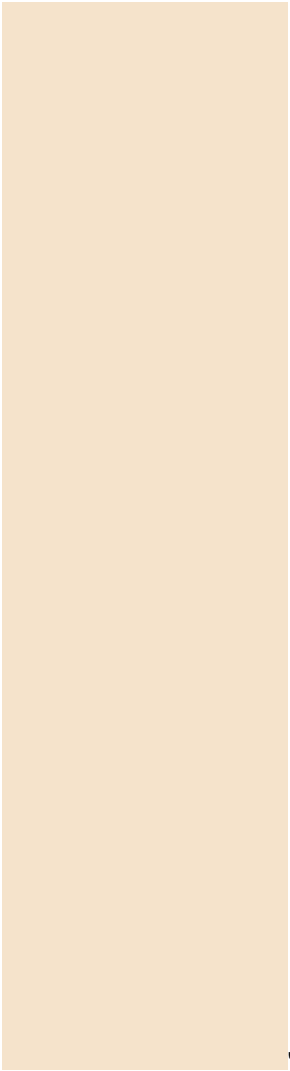
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