



(Staff photo by Linda Baker)

Scene of fatal plane crash in which Prosser man Henry 'Ike' Anderson Jr. died.

Prosser man Ike Anderson dies in plane crash near Sunnyside

By LINDA BAKER
Of the Herald-Republic

SUNNYSIDE — A prominent Lower Valley man known for his longtime community service and dedication to the improvement of agriculture was killed Sunday in a single-engine plane crash near Sunnyside.

The death of Henry "Ike" Anderson Jr. shocked residents in his hometown of Prosser, where one person described the 53-year-old Anderson as "a progressive, down-to-earth type of guy with a community conscience and an extreme concern for agriculture."

Anderson is thought to have died instantly when his two-seat Piper Super Cub plane apparently struck power lines and dived into a gully off

Highway 241 about eight miles north of Sunnyside, on the Anderson property.

The crash was only a few miles from the 320 acres Joe Anderson and the Anderson family donated to Yakima Valley Community College for use as an agriculture training facility.

Joe Anderson, Ike's brother, drowned in the mid-1970s in an accident at the family ranch.

Family members using another plane discovered the crash site at 5:30 a.m. Monday after renewing a private search launched Sunday night when Anderson failed to return home for Easter dinner, law enforcement officials said Monday.

The second plane was disabled when the relatives — including

Anderson's brother — made an emergency landing in an adjacent, freshly plowed field to reach the crash site.

A spokesman for the Yakima County Sheriff's Department said Anderson, a contractor with the U.S. Department of Energy, was flying his routine border patrol around the Hanford Nuclear Reservation when his plane crashed. He was alone in the plane.

A conflicting report said Anderson — who reportedly had been flying since age 17 — was checking cattle on the family's expansive ranch along Rattlesnake Ridge when the accident occurred.

Officials with the Federal Aviation
(See PLANE CRASH, Page 2A)

BIO.00045

Plane crash/ from Page 1A

Administration in Seattle were called to the sagebrush-covered site Monday to investigate the cause of the fatal crash.

Energy and law enforcement officials speculated Anderson was flying south down a shallow gully Sunday when the plane's fixed landing gear caught on the three high-voltage power lines, flipping the plane.

The pull on the lines was so great it shattered an insulator atop twin power poles nearby.

But Energy officials were at a loss to explain Monday why the stress did not break the aluminum-wrapped power lines, which carry 115,000 volts of electricity.

James Cook of the Bonneville Power Administration said the lines' automatic relay system registered a strong power surge at 11:14 a.m. Sunday, leading officials to believe that is the time Anderson's plane went down.

Law enforcement officials at the scene said it appears the plane was gliding without power, because its propeller was still intact and showed no signs of striking the ground while rotating.

Friends and associates expressed grief Monday at losing the man they described as a behind-the-scenes worker who purposely avoided publicity.

"It's a tragic loss for the whole Valley," said Prosser Mayor Bob White. "He was an outstanding person who had given of himself to the whole community."

Joan Harris, chairman of YVC's board of directors, said Anderson's advocacy for higher education and agriculture "will be sorely missed."

Anderson was a longtime member of the Benton County Cattleman's Association, the Department of Agriculture Crop Improvement Board, the Benton Rural Electric Association and the county committee of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

In February he was honored for his outstanding contributions to the Benton Soil Conservation District, where he was on the board of supervisors for about 20 years.

Anderson also was a member of the Prosser School Board from June 1967 to August 1970 and served briefly as a Benton County commissioner in 1970-71.