

LOCAL

Rescuers lend a hand to save a hand

Timmy Saldo's hand caught in machine at Cheyenne International in Grover

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A man nearly lost his hand on Thursday afternoon after an industrial accident at the Cheyenne International plant at 701 S. Battleground Avenue, in Grover.

Timmy Saldo, 35, was working his post when his hand was skewered and caught in a machine around 1 p.m. Grover Rescue Chief David Campbell said that the machine had spikes spaced about a quarter of an inch apart. One of the spikes went into his hand and pulled it up into rollers in the machine.

His hand, although bloody and now impaled by at least two spikes, was still attached as crews worked feverishly to free him. It took six rescue departments, multiple Jaws of Life and over two hours to free Saldo from the machine. Grover Rescue, Kings Mountain Rescue, Cleveland County EMS, Grover Rural, Township 3 and Bethlehem volunteer fire departments all came to the rescue.

Campbell said that a helicopter was flown in to transport Saldo to Carolinas Medical Center. He added that a second helicopter, carrying a trauma surgeon, was also flown to the scene in case the hand needed to be amputated in order to free

him from the machine's grasp. "Cleveland Regional advised that they could not handle the hand injury so the level one trauma center got the surgeon to come down here to do whatever we had to do," said Cleveland County EMS Shift Captain Jackie McCurry.

"They actually got it (the hand) out (of the machine) right before the helicopter landed with the trauma surgeon," Campbell said.

"We finally pried the machine open using the Jaws of Life," McCurry added.

Saldo was airlifted to CMC after he was extricated from the machine. "He was stable throughout and they did not have to amputate and hopefully he'll be fine," McCurry said on Thursday, outside of the plant.

One of Thursday's rescuers, Grover Firefighter Jody Byers has stayed informed of Saldo's condition. He said that doctors were going to let him out of the hospital on Saturday, but they ran into some complications. Saldo is still in a lot of pain and doctors are not quite sure about two of his fingers, Byers said.

Rescue workers were honored at the Grover fire station, on Friday, for their heroic actions, dedication and use of equipment in freeing Saldo. Hurst Jaws of Life, in Shelby, who manufactures the Jaws of Life tools used in helping save

Saldo's hand, presented rescue workers with certificates, helmet stickers and patches. "Although you are a volunteer, you are a professional. You made a very big difference in somebody's life yesterday," said Director of Marketing at Hurst Aaron Guenther. "The rescue could have been much worse."

After presenting them with awards, Guenther asked them about the rescue and how the tools came in handy.

"We were trying to make enough room to get the spreaders (Jaws of Life) into the rollers in the back of the machine," said Grover Assistant Fire Chief Jimmy Hensley, in order to gain access to the rollers and Saldo's hand.

One of the departments' Jaws of Life was broken during the rescue. Hensley said that with the spreader jamming and breaking, it "allowed room in front for the other spreader (Jaws of Life) which actually allowed us to free him. The tools working hand-in-hand did the job."

"Well, we're happy you broke the tool using it," Guenther told them.

They jokingly suggested a free Jaws of Life from Hurst to replace the broken one, which belongs to KM Rescue Squad.

"It was a good effort from everybody. You probably couldn't have asked for a better scene



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Cleveland County EMS Shift Captain Jackie McCurry and Grover Rescue Chief David Campbell talk to reporters outside of Cheyenne International, in Grover, on Thursday after a two-and-a-half hour rescue, freeing a man who got his hand stuck in one of the plant's machines.

to be handled and run as good as everything went once everybody got on the scene and started doing their job. It was one of the best operations I've been on," said Grover Firefighter Chris Swanson.

"I want to express my personal thanks for your service to the community because that's what it's all about," Guenther said.

McCurry said that the Cheyenne plant manufactures cigarettes.



Grover Assistant Fire Chief Jimmy Hensley receives an award and shakes hands with Hurst Director of Marketing Aaron Guenther. Hurst, which manufactures the Jaws of Life used to rescue a man, who got his hand stuck in a machine on Thursday, honored rescuers on Friday afternoon at the Grover Fire Station.

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