

Area man falls through ice on pond after flying drones, dies

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Madison County Coroner Steve Nonn is reporting the death of a Granite City man whose body was recovered from a pond near the entrance to Low Water Dam on Chouteau Island in the City of Madison Sunday.

The man was identified as **Mark A. Miller, 54, of Granite City.**

Madison Police notified the Coroner's Office that a body had been recovered and requested that they respond to the scene. It was reported that a 54-year-old white male had fallen into the frozen water. The decedent was flying drones with his 11-year old-son when one of the drones malfunctioned and crashed on the ice. The decedent told his son to sit in their vehicle while he went to retrieve the drone. It appears that when the decedent walked across the ice to retrieve the drone, he fell through the ice.

His son had waited for the decedent to return and sat in the vehicle for approximately three hours before the vehicle ran out of gas. The 11-year-old then left the car and began walking to get help. A concerned motorist saw the young boy walking along W. Chain of Rocks Rd and picked him up and took him to the Madison County Sheriff's Department sub-station in Mitchell, Illinois, at 9:03 p.m. Saturday where a deputy sheriff who was at the sub-station initiated the investigation.

Madison Police and Madison County Sheriff's Department personnel returned to the scene and with the assistance of St. Louis County Police helicopter illuminating the area were able to find footprints that were followed to a point at the pond where a break in the ice was seen. **Madison Fire Department** was called out for the search and recovery and was assisted by **Long Lake Fire Department**.

The young boy did not witness his father fall into the ice. He is now with his mother who does not live in the area, the parents are divorced. The son was with his father on a scheduled visitation.

The decedent was last seen shortly before 6 p.m. by his son and his body was recovered at 2:10 a.m. Coroners Investigator Sakina Hall pronounced death on scene at 2:11 a.m.

An autopsy conducted today revealed drowning as the preliminary cause of death. Routine toxicology testing will be completed before a final autopsy report is filed.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Reed Chapel in Harrisburg, IL.