Company Pleads Guilty in Soybean Suffocation Death

It has taken more than two years, but a Nebraska company has finally pleaded guilty in the death of an employee who was buried alive by soybeans in 2003.

Former Lincoln resident Troy Childers, 28, died after suffocating in soybeans when he entered a grain elevator on Nov. 4, 2003. It was reported he was attempting to free a blockage when he became buried.

Court documents revealed that a conveyor belt that facilitated the flow of beans was left running while Childers was fixing the clog. This violated federal safety standards. For example, no lockout/tagout procedures were performed on the conveyor belt while Childers was working. Also lacking was rescue equipment, body harnesses and a human spotter to watch for an emergency while Childers worked in the grain elevator.

United Farmers Cooperative pleaded guilty to the violations and will pay a $100,000 fine. ?