



A helicopter prepares to transport a Diamond Point resident who fell from a ladder. Officials with Harborview Medical Center said the man died a day later.

Man who recently moved to Diamond Point dies the day after airlift from new helipad

Dan Murphy had fallen from a ladder while he was working on a hangar at his new home

By Matthew Nash

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DIAMOND POINT — The first flight from Diamond Point Airport 2WA1's new helipad had a sad ending.

Dan Murphy, a longtime Ocean Shores businessman and avid pilot, died Sunday afternoon, a day after he was airlifted to the hospital from the airport, according to a spokesperson at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

On Saturday, he had fallen from a ladder while he was working on a hangar at his new home on the 100 block of Lupine Drive. He was 63.

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He and his wife, Joyce, had just moved to the area, said their son, Kory, who lives in Forks.

“They had everything sold in Ocean Shores, and just the weekend before, they had just taken the last loads out of their hangar in Ocean Shores and just got everything moved into the building where they had storage,” Kory told the North Coast News of Ocean Shores.

They had been staying in a motorhome while building a new home, he said.

Last year, the Murphys, who had been business owners in Ocean Shores since 1996, sold their Lighthouse restaurant at 850 Pt. Brown Ave. NE and their home near the airport. They told the Ocean Shores newspaper that they wanted to retire from retail and pursue their love of flying.

They owned a 1953 Piper Super Cub and an experimental plane they built in 2004. Their plans were to build a new home in an airpark setting, where private homes and aircraft hangars are located adjacent to a small airport.

A big reason for the move to the Sequim area was to enjoy more sunny days for flying, the newspaper said.

“They were building a hangar-home, and he was on a six-foot ladder,” Kory said.

“He was caulking under the eaves on some siding. He wasn’t very high, but when my mother found him, he was laying on the concrete,” he continued. “There was nobody around and no one saw it.”

Fire Chief Ben Andrews, with Clallam County Fire District 3, said a volunteer firefighter was on scene within four minutes of the call for help, and a medical team from the Blyn station was there within 10 minutes, followed by a second medical unit from the Sequim station.

The new helipad has been an important project for Diamond Point residents.

Last year, members of the Diamond Point Airport Association (DPAA) sought to improve their makeshift helipad, a 40-foot-by-40-foot mowed space along the airport’s runway.

Kaye Gagnon, a volunteer for the association, said more than 50 members of the airport association began exploring safer options after a miscue during an airlift incident in 2017 to pick up a patient following a nearby car wreck. She said the pilot had difficulty finding the helipad because there wasn’t a lighting system.

Airport association members partnered with Boy Scout Troop 1498, led by Ben Wright, to pave the new pad.

Gagnon said that in the coming months, DPAA members plan to paint the helipad and upgrade it eventually with lights.

She said nearby residents plan to help Murphy's family in various ways as they deal with their loss.

In addition to his wife and son Kory, 39, Dan Murphy is survived by another son, Jesse, 37, of McCleary.

Diamond Point Airport opened in 1965 with the closest helipads in the city of Sequim next to the Jamestown Family Health Clinic and the Jefferson County International Airport in Port Townsend.

While the airport is private, Gagnon said airport association members have allowed emergency landings at no public expense for more than 50 years to both Clallam and Jefferson counties.

The airport is also part of Clallam County's Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) program.

For more information on Diamond Point Airport 2WA1, visit www.2wa1.com.

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