



Telling the Story – Development of a Collaborative Outreach Project



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INTRODUCTION

Narrative is perhaps the most basic mode of human interaction, and a fundamental way of delivering knowledge. Narratives have been shown to influence attitudes and change behaviors. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers including the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH), the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH) and the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH) are collaborating on a new translation activity to convey the story of agricultural safety. While statistics and numbers are important to identify injury trends and emerging issues related to workplace health and safety, Telling the Story Project (TTS) takes a closer look, creating injury prevention messages that highlight personal stories based on first-hand experiences.

THE STORYTELLERS: Tell a story, save a life

Research indicates that farmers are more open to safety messages after reading about a traumatic farm incident. Research also indicates that farmers generally consider other farmers and agricultural publications to be trusted sources of information. Telling the Story Project helps farmers, and all who have been impacted by fatal and non-fatal agricultural workplace injuries (workers, family and community members), share their stories.

Told in their own words, their experiences teach us what went wrong, and how to prevent or avoid similar incidents.

They tell their stories because, **“We don’t want this to happen to anyone else.”**

THE PROCESS

The Telling the Story Project collaborative team began work on the project in late 2016. The team includes an industrial hygienist/incident investigator, agricultural engineer, media relations specialist and two outreach specialists.

- Plans and work for TTS Project are discussed during bimonthly teleconferences and biannual face to face meetings.
- Prospective stories are identified and potential storytellers are contacted.
- TTS team members conduct interviews in person, on site and by phone. Interviews may include videotaping.
- Important prevention messages and “lessons learned” are included in stories to assist producers identify the best practices to work safely.
- Storytellers review and approve the final content of edited stories and videos.
- Relevant links to safety and health resources are included on story pages.
- New stories are uploaded on www.tellingthestoryproject.org and published as original content in regional agricultural media publications



THE TARGET AUDIENCE

While Telling the Story intends to reach a wide audience, our stories’ target audience includes:

- Producers, families, and employees working in agriculture
- Agricultural media and mainstream press
- Ag educators and students
- Extension specialists

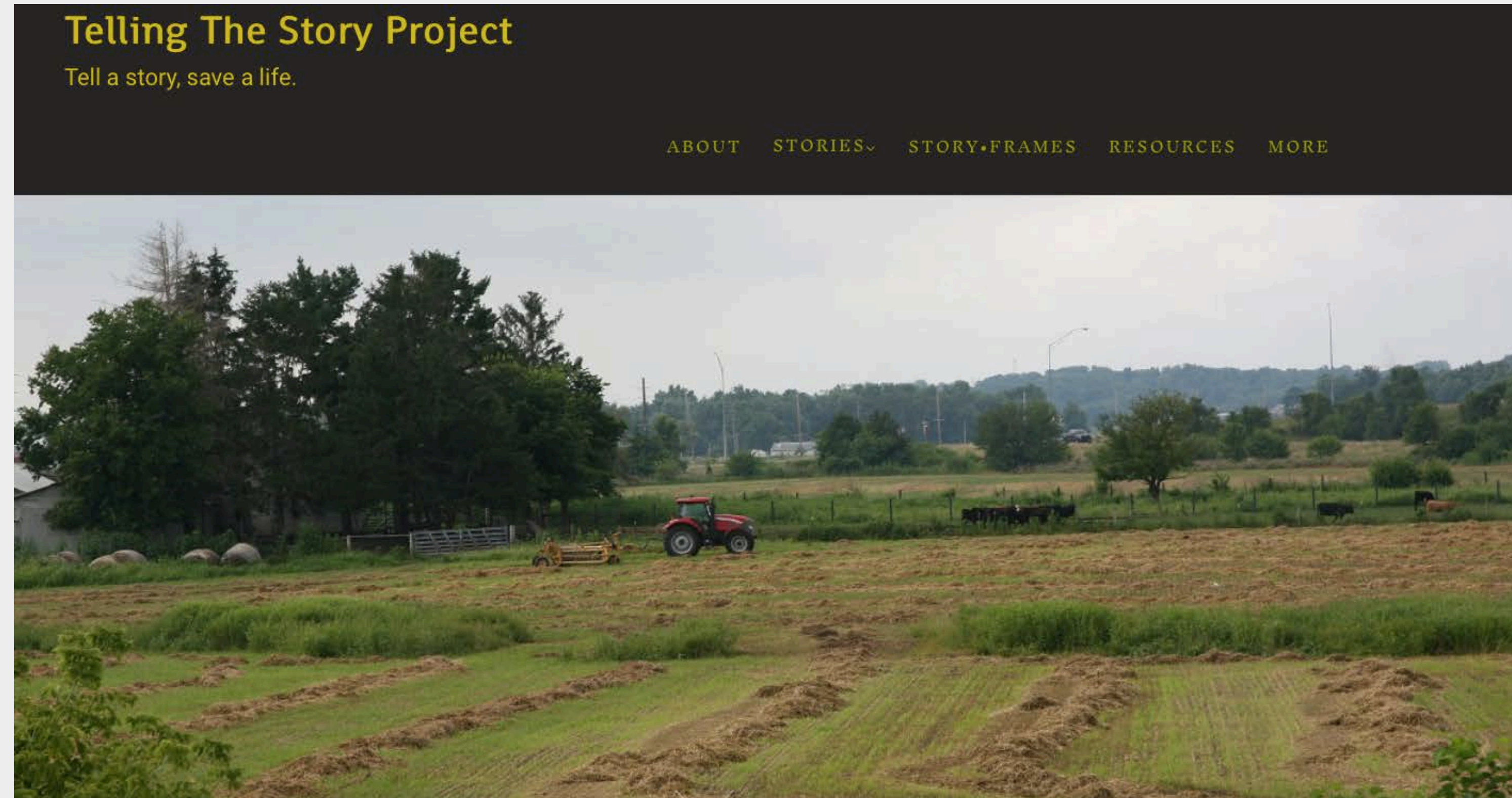
Terms of use for TTS materials are included on the website.



The STORY-FRAME page houses illustrations that are included with the storytelling narratives and provide succinct messages and serve as clip-able reminders

SHARING THE STORIES

www.tellingthestoryproject.org #tellingthestoryproject



- A dedicated website, www.Tellingthestoryproject.org, houses multi-media stories that include prevention resources, and video interviews (STORIES).
- Additional pages include illustrations that convey a story with a succinct reminder (STORY-FRAMES), links to ag health and safety information (RESOURCES), links to exceptional stories published by others (MORE), and information on TTS (ABOUT).
- Telling the Story Project narratives are also shared on collaborating Ag Centers’ home and Facebook pages.

“Even without that atmospheric cap, it could happen again to someone else,” she said. “Hydrogen sulfide is so highly toxic.”



“About 90 seconds” after starting to rinse off the floor with his cold water electric washer, Sheets said, he heard “a WHOOM and a BOOM.”

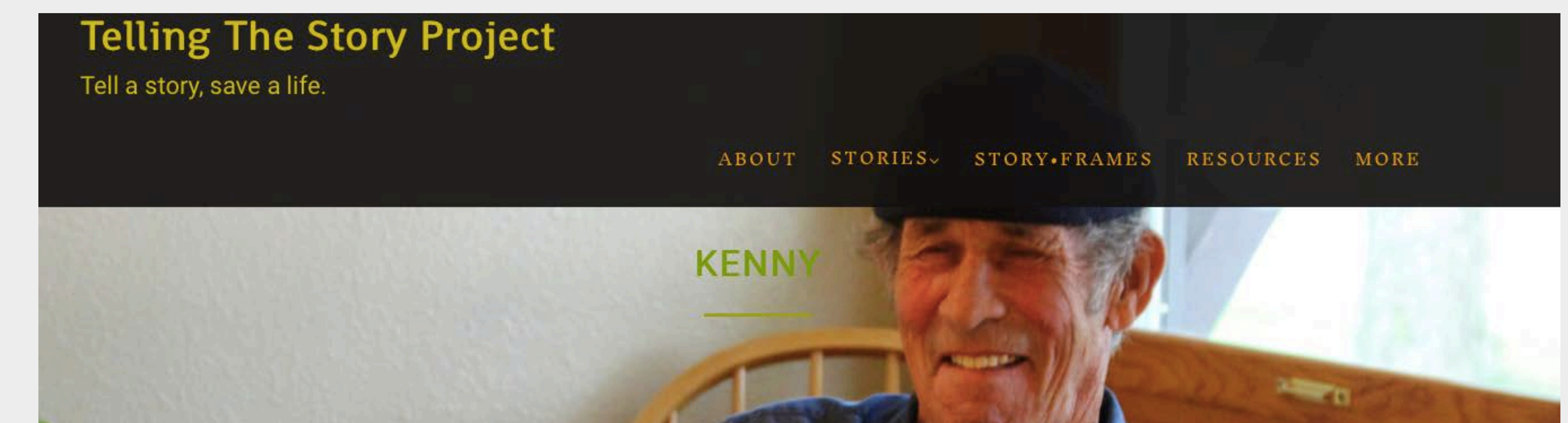
He was engulfed by a fire ball that burned 20 percent of his body, including his arms, hands, and face, and melted his glasses.



THE STORIES TO DATE

Initial stories address under-recognized low-incidence, high-risk hazards that have claimed human and livestock lives in the Midwest (manure gases) as well as common, overlooked hazards of daily work.

- Hydrogen Sulfide Gas** released during agitation or transfer of stored manure. The topic is timely due to 2016 farmer fatality that occurred near an open air lagoon, multiple fatalities involving would-be rescuers, and livestock deaths that occurred at open cattle confinement buildings during agitation and pumping. A family who lost their son describes their experience and motivation to improve safety for others, and a husband and wife share their experience of a rare incident surviving a hydrogen sulfide exposure that could easily have resulted in multiple fatalities.
- Flash Fires** caused by methane gas that was released into the air when water spray broke foam bubbles in a swine barn. The open pilot light on an LP heater provided the ignition source when methane concentration rapidly reached the lower explosive limit concentration in the closed room.
- Falls** that resulted in a broken tibia from a fall while dismounting a tractor; and broken ribs from falling from the top stop of a 10-foot step ladder .
- Entanglement** in the auger of a grinder-mixer, resulting in a amputation below the shoulder.
- ATV Overturn** occurring while spot-spraying thistles in a lower pasture when four-wheeler overturned and rolled over the farmer, breaking his femur near the hip.
- Ladder Failure** caused the ladder side rail to break, resulting in the farmer falling 15 feet to the concrete.
- Taking a Shortcut** often leads to an accident. This experience involved choosing the wrong ladder for the job and resulted in a fall and distal radius fracture (broken wrist).



INITIAL IMPACT

- Storytellers indicate that having the opportunity to share their experience to help others has been a positive experience.
- Stories beget stories. TTS stories shared on social media prompt additional sharing and relaying of similar incidents and cautionary advice.
- Our stories have been featured in SafetyWatch columns of Iowa Farmer Today affiliated publications, weekly print agricultural media publications that reach over 84K households in the Midwest, and online at www.agupdate.com.
- Stories published in partnering agricultural media have consistently ranked in the top 5 most popular online articles of the week.
- Preliminary review by regional agricultural media publishers and Wisconsin vocational ag instructors has been enthusiastic and positive, with teachers indicating intended use in fall 2018 curriculum.

NEXT STEPS

Official roll-out of program occurs in summer 2018 via ISASH, social media, press releases, feature articles and agricultural safety and health courses. Next steps include:

- Collecting data on website traffic following summer 2018 roll-out
- Developing a “cameo” page with submitted thumbnail stories
- Developing discussion guides for selected stories to be used in ag education classrooms
- Dissemination to vocational ag education teachers and agricultural extension specialists

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