

## **66<sup>th</sup> Gordon Bennett Cup Statement on Poland Team 1 Accident**

Officials with the Gordon Bennett Cup issued the following statement concerning the Poland Team 1 accident near Crandall, Texas:

*Monday evening, a sport gas balloon participating in the 66<sup>th</sup> Gordon Bennett Cup, an international distance competition, was involved in an accident which included coming into contact with a powerline near Crandall Texas, located Southeast of Dallas. The Balloon, Poland Team 1, was piloted by Krzysztof Zapart and Pjotr Halas, both are residents of Poland. Both pilots sustained injuries and were transported to Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Zapart, the lead pilot sustained cuts and burns to his legs and arms, Mr. Halas is being treated for burns and broken bones to his legs and mid-section. Both are experienced gas balloon pilots who have logged significant time in gas balloons. Our thoughts are with the gentlemen, their families and friends for a full and complete recovery.*

*Poland Team 1 was one of 17 gas balloons participating in the Gordon Bennett Cup. The team was the first to take flight when the launch window opened on Saturday evening, 8:30 pm. All of the balloon teams launched from Balloon Fiesta Park in Albuquerque New Mexico; traveling east toward the Texas New Mexico Border, the team took winds that angled them toward the Dallas Fort Worth Area, crossing over Arlington at approximately 3:30pm Central Time. Poland Team 1 was flying at an altitude of 12,000 feet to pass over the Dallas Fort Worth Airspace, and started their descent a short time later. The balloon's tracking device indicated that the aircraft's motion had stopped at 7:25pm. There was good weather and good visibility in Crandall at the time of the accident.*

*All of the balloons are filled with Hydrogen Gas, this is an industry standard for flying gas balloons in both North America and Europe, where the sport is very popular.*

*The team's two person chase crew was in Wichita Falls, Texas at the time of the accident. This is typical for gas balloon chase crew to stage in an area for a time and then to catch up with the team. The chase crew are now with the pilots in Dallas.*

*The Gordon Bennet Competition continues today, there are 8 teams still in flight, several are anticipated to be landing this morning.*

### **About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta & Gordon Bennett Cup**

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil, is the host for the 66<sup>th</sup> Gordon Bennett Cup. The Balloon Fiesta is a festival of hot air balloons that takes place in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on Twitter @BalloonFiesta and Facebook.