



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Noreen Price
Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaska Regional Office

Date: November 1, 2018
Persons Contacted: Craig Young, Regal Air ex-pilot
NTSB Accident Number: ANC18FA055, Willow, Alaska

Narrative: Mr. Young was previously a pilot for Regal Air. He contacted the NTSB and an interview was conducted by telephone. This is a summary of his statements.

Mr. Young flew for Regal Air in 2014. He left after one season because he was “burned out” from being pushed to fly. After Dave Oberg was recently killed in another Regal Air accident, he felt compelled to talk to the NTSB about the company.

Mr. Young stated that he left the company because he always felt undue pressure to fly. Tony Bannock, the vice president and usual duty officer, pushed him too hard and it was not safe. Mr. Bannock would say things such as “I checked the weather and you are good to go,” rather than letting pilot’s make their own decisions. He would also encourage pilots to go “and just take a peek” at the weather. The turnarounds at the base were very quick and there was usually no time to check the loads or weights. The ramp crews did that. They were always in a rush. Mr. Young stated that he got burned out after one season. Mike Laughlin was the other manager and he never pushed pilots. He was great to work for.

Mr. Young remained friends with Dave Oberg, who was the Regal Air senior check airman at that time of the Willow accident. He talked to Mr. Oberg on occasion. After the Willow accident, Mr. Oberg told Mr. Young that he was getting pushed very hard to fly all the time and he was exhausted. Mr. Oberg stated to him that he was not comfortable with the level of training the new pilots were getting, because some of them did not have much experience. He specifically had issues with the chief pilot teaching new pilots step taxi takeoffs instead of encouraging load adjustments. Mr. Oberg felt that new pilots were sent out on trips that they were not prepared for.

Mr. Young flew for other operators and guides, and in his experience, companies would keep new pilots on tours first, and not send them to unknown places until they flew with another experienced pilot. Mr. Young felt much safer at other companies.

When Mr. Young flew for Regal Air, he did start out on a Cessna 206 on wheels, and moved to floats, and then transitioned to the Beaver after getting some experience.