



Federal Aviation Administration

October 6, 2015

INSPECTOR'S STATEMENT

10/5/2015 – LLB, HSP, and JAC were informed of and assigned to investigate a non-fatal accident involving a Cessna 150 (N3174J) which occurred at approximately 0430 local CST on Monday, 10/05/2015 near the town of Dexter, MO. At approximately 0830 CST, prior to leaving for the accident site the FAA inspector team conducted a telecom with Trooper R. Gibson from the Missouri State Highway Patrol. During that discussion, it was learned that the aircraft was located in a wooded area South of Dexter, Mo. Trooper Gibson stated that the pilot Mr. John Launius had walked away from the crash and went to a nearby house to ask for help. Upon arrival at the house, he banged on the door for help and the resident called the authorities. Trooper Gibson stated that when he arrived Mr. Launius' face was all bloody and his eyes were swelled shut. He also said that he smelled alcohol on the pilot's breath and then asked him to provide a blood sample. Mr. Launius consented to the sample. Trooper Gibson stated there was no post-crash fire, the aircraft was located approximately 200 yards from a road, the aircraft was somewhat intact and that he would stay at the site as long as he could while FAA inspectors made their way down to the accident site. Trooper Gibson also mentioned that the pilot stated that he hadn't flown at night in a while. The pilot was transported to St Francis Hospital in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

At approximately 12:20 PM CST the FAA inspectors arrived at the hospital to interview the pilot. We first discussed our intentions with the Charge Nurse to determine if Mr. Launius was in a stable enough condition for us to ask him a few questions. The nurse said that should be no problem but that we would have to wait until he was finished meeting with the doctor. After a delay of 30 minutes while Mr. Launius was in consultation with a facial surgeon we were allowed to conduct an interview. Inspector Pujji and Bettis asked Mr. Launius to read and sign a Pilot's Bill Of Rights, which Mr. Launius consented to signing. During the interview Mr. Launius's wife was present during most of the questioning. Initially Mr. Launius stated he didn't remember much about what happened except crawling from the aircraft after the crash. He said he had taken off from Dexter Municipal (KDXE) airport at approximately 4:00 AM and was 2-3 miles from the airport flying in the local area to get in some night flying and that weather was not an issue. He recalled leveling off at 1500 to 1600 feet, and that he flew for approximately 30 minutes prior to his aircraft "falling from the sky". He stated he was the aircraft owner and purchased it in the spring of 2015, and that the aircraft had undergone an annual inspection in July. He also stated that his medical was current and mentioned that his aircraft was not equipped with shoulder harnesses although he was wearing his lap belt. When asked about his flying experience, Mr. Launius stated he had

approximately 100 hours in the Cessna 150 and around 300 total hours of flying time in a Cessna 172 and a Piper. He also stated that he went to bed the night before the accident at around 10:00 PM. His wife mentioned that it wasn't unusual for him to get up very early in the morning. Mr. Launius gave the FAA permission to obtain any records or logs that were located in the aircraft. During the interview the pilot was very cooperative and at the end of the interview we wished him a speedy recovery.

We then drove to Dexter, Mo. met up with Trooper Gibson and he led us to the crash site which was located in a densely wooded area. We arrived at the scene at approximately 2:00 PM and began taking pictures and inspecting the wreckage. The aircraft was in one piece and it was sitting upright on the ground tangled in tree branches and ground brush; pointed in a Southwesterly direction. No evidence of pre or post-crash fire. Several large tree limbs were knocked down as a result of impact from the aircraft. Upon surveying the damage it appears that the propeller was not providing power as the aircraft descended into the trees. This was evident by the fact that only one prop blade sustained major damage and we found a huge dent in the spinner. Both fuel tanks were checked and neither left nor right tank showed any signs of fuel. We didn't notice any smell of fuel at the site nor was there any visual evidence that fuel leaked had from the aircraft. The left wing tip was buckled and the right wing was bent in an upward angle at the wing root. It appears the aircraft was flying in a Southerly direction, stalled from lack of power and crashed through several large tree branches before coming to rest.

We then left the crash site and drove to Dexter Municipal airport in order to meet the airport manager Mr. Mike Williams and to review fuel purchase logs. Fuel transactions log for fuel purchases at KDXE between 09/13/2015 and 10/05/2015 show that on 9/16/2015 Mr. John Launius purchased 13.44 gallons of 100 low lead fuel.