



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: July 13, 2017
Person Contacted: Paul Moffett
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA244 – Stirum, North Dakota

Narrative:

Mr. Moffett reported that he had loaded the airplane with the application chemicals and fuel before the accident flight. The airplane was loaded about 5:00am with about 600 gallons of Bravo fungicide/water mixture and about 200 gallons of fuel. The flight ultimately departed about 7:00am due to weather.

Mr. Moffett recalled that, at the time of departure, the visibility was about 1-1/2 miles with overcast clouds, a light wind, and no precipitation. The pilot had spoken with individuals by phone before the flight in an attempt to assess the local weather conditions. The flight had been delayed about two hours waiting for the fog to clear.

Mr. Moffett was not aware of any mechanical issues with the airplane and the pilot seemed to be in a good mood. Flying had been limited to mornings in the days before the accident due to afternoon wind conditions.

----- End of entries -----



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Central Region

Date: July 13, 2017
Person Contacted: Brian Orn
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA244 – Stirum, North Dakota

Narrative:

Mr. Orn was outside his home at the time of the accident. He recalled hearing the airplane, but did not see it. From the sound of the engine, the airplane seemed to be heading northeast toward Lisbon. It was “quite foggy” at the time; although, the fog had lifted somewhat from earlier in the morning. He estimated that at the time of the accident there was about 200 feet of relatively good visibility below the fog/cloud layer.

Mr. Orn noted that nothing seemed wrong with the airplane based on the sound. He added that there is a lot of airplane traffic near his home and he is familiar with the sound. However, he was surprised to hear an airplane that morning because of the fog.

Mr. Orn later realized that the accident site was located about 450 yards southeast from his home. After the accident, he called the local authorities and responded to the accident site with his brother who lives about one mile from him. The time of the 911 call was 7:40am. He commented that the ground rises gradually approaching his property from the west; the elevation is approximately 56 feet lower about one-half mile west of his house.

----- End of entries -----



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Central Region

Date: July 13, 2017
Person Contacted: Lindy Orn
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA244 – Stirum, North Dakota

Narrative:

Ms. Orn was on her patio drinking coffee at the time of the accident. She recalled hearing the airplane before she was able to see it. It sounded like the airplane was headed toward the east. The sound of the engine was normal; “not anything unusual at all.” She commonly heard spray planes in the area and was used to the sound. She noted that it was “very, very foggy” at the time, adding that she was just able to make out the outline of a prominent tree about 200 yards from the patio.

Ms. Orn reported observing the airplane emerge from the fog heading east and, “within seconds,” impact the ground. The airplane was level or descending slightly. The airplane did not appear to change its flight path before the impact, adding that the pilot likely wouldn’t have had enough time. The airplane impacted into gradually rising terrain. It didn’t appear to her that the airplane was out of control or that anything was wrong mechanically.

Ms. Orn noted that she was out about 6:30am walking her dog. At that time, the fog was “very dense,” with the visibility less than 200 yards. The fog had lifted somewhat from then until the accident; however, the visibility at the time of the accident was only about 200 yards. There was no precipitation and little or no wind at the time.

----- End of entries -----



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Central Region

Date: June 30, 2017
Person Contacted: Arne Widmer, Manager -- Oakes Airport
NTSB Accident Number: CEN17LA244 – Stirum, North Dakota

Narrative:

Mr. Widmer is the manager of the Oakes Municipal Airport. He was contacted in conjunction with the AWOS unit installed at the airport.

Mr. Widmer reported that he was about 15 miles north of Oakes at the time of the accident. He stated that it was “extremely foggy” at that time and estimated the visibility was less than 1/4 mile. At times, the fog had been “heavier” with the visibility at 300 to 400 feet. The wind was calm and there was no precipitation at that time.

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