



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Aaron M. Sauer
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: April 25, 2018
Person Contacted: Mr. Ben Bulcher
NTSB Accident Number: CEN18LA146

Narrative:

During a telephone call with the pilot, he stated that prior to the flight, he and the company chief pilot reviewed the weather/radar from the company computer program. The pilot stated that based on the computer briefing, which did not include icing conditions, he was aware of the forecasted weather conditions along the route of flight and at the intended destination.

He reported that after takeoff and during the climb to 12,000 ft, the airplane encountered light rime ice, and he activated the de-ice equipment with no issues noted with the equipment. After crossing over the Pierre Airport, he heard via the radio reports of better weather at a lower altitude, and then requested a descent to between 5,000 and 6,000 ft. During a descent to 6,000 ft, the airplane encountered light to moderate icing conditions, and prior to the descent, the airplane was clear of ice accumulation. The pilot thought about turning back to Pierre but could not get clearance until the airplane was closer to Pine Ridge due to poor radio coverage. Shortly thereafter, the pilot stated it felt "like a sheet of ice fell on us" as the airplane encountered severe icing conditions. He applied full engine power in an attempt to maintain altitude. The airplane exited the overcast cloud layer about 500 ft above ground level (agl). The pilot decided to execute an off-airport emergency landing because the airplane could not maintain altitude, and his goal was to get the airplane down as safe as possible.

He reported no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation, and the airplane was below its maximum gross weight.