

18-17071		Callaway County Sheriff Incident Report				Page: 1 of 9			
Occurred On Date 10/17/2018 2:22:55 PM		Occurred To Date		Reported Date 10/17/2018 2:22:55 PM		Case Number 18-17071			
Incident Type									
Complaint Type 055 - Aircraft Crash						Case Status [REDACTED]			
Address [REDACTED]				City/State/Zip Callaway County,					
Location Detail Potawatomi Camp Grounds									
District/Division Callaway County				Patrol Area E/NE					
Reporting Officer Jeffrey Harding			Rank Investigator			Badge			
Occurrence Synopsis									
Property Property (Seized - Evidence)									
Name (EVIDENCE) CCSO									
[REDACTED]		Make		Model		Quantity [REDACTED]			
[REDACTED]						Serial#			
						[REDACTED]			
Current Location L414									
Loss		Loss Date			Loss				
Business (Involvement) Commercial/Business									
Business Name (EVIDENCE) CCSO									
Address				City/State/Zip Fulton, MO					
Business Phone				Business Fax					
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]			
Person (Involvement) Information, Father of victim									
Name [REDACTED]			Race	Ethnicity		Sex	DOB	HGT	WGT
Address [REDACTED]				City/State/Zip [REDACTED]					
Employer				Occupation					
Home Phone		Cell Phone [REDACTED]		DL. Number		SSN			

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Person (Involvement)							
Witness							
Name		Race	Ethnicity	Sex		HGT	WGT
Charles Houchins							
Address		City/State/Zip					
Employer		Occupation					
Home Phone		Cell Phone	DL. Number		SSN		
Person (Involvement)							
Victim, Deceased							
Name		Race	Ethnicity			HGT	WGT
Charles L Jr Prather							
Address		City/State/Zip					
Home Phone		Business Phone	DL. Number		SSN		
Property							
Property (Seized - Evidence)							
Name							
		Make	Model		Quantity		
					1		
Description					Serial#		
Current Location							
L419							
Loss		Loss Date		Loss			
Person (Involvement)							
Witness							
Name		Race	Ethnicity	Sex	DOB	HGT	WGT
Curt W. Houchins							
Address		City/State/Zip					
Home Phone		Cell Phone	DL. Number		SSN		
Person (Involvement)							
Complainant							
Name		Race	Ethnicity	Sex	DOB	HGT	WGT
Dennis Shrock							
Address		City/State/Zip					
Employer		Occupation					
Home Phone		Business Phone	DL. Number		SSN		

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Person (Involvement)									
Information									
Name									
James Barton									
Address		City/State/Zip							
Home Phone		Business Phone		DL. Number		SSN			
Person (Involvement)									
Information									
Name		Race	Ethnicity		Sex	DOB	HGT	WGT	
Keith Eugene West									
Address		City/State/Zip							
		Occupation							
Home Phone		Cell Phone		DL. Number		SSN			

Supp (Bettina Korte-Sweede) Contact w/ Curt Houchins - witness (10/17/2018 3:00:00 PM)

On October 17, 2018, approximately 2:30 PM, Sgt. Foley advised there was a reported helicopter crash near CR 101. PA Inv Bob Smith and I advised we would respond to the area to assist with the search of the downed aircraft. Per dispatch updates on the radio, persons at [REDACTED] witnessed the aircraft in distress. Inv. Smith and I made contact with Curt Houchins and Charles Houchins at [REDACTED]; they were working on a construction project at the location.

Curt advised he saw a black and orange helicopter and heard the engine stop. The helicopter was too high for Curt or Charles to read any numbers on the aircraft. The helicopter began to lose altitude quickly and began to spin, in a downward spiral and quickly disappeared below the tree line. Curt pointed north east as he described the location he noticed the helicopter initially and then pointed over his head and ended pointed south east, as he described the path the helicopter took as Curt noticed 'he lost a propeller' and said, 'blade quit' and 'sputtered three times'. Curt denied seeing anyone or anything separate from the aircraft prior to the aircraft disappearing into the trees. Curt is familiar with the area he believed the aircraft would be recovered, as he has property that shares a border with Potawatomi property. Curt was specific as he gave the location as 'between Glover Lake Springs and Bartley'.

Aircraft from MSHP and a Staff for Life helicopter arrived in the area to assist with the search of the downed aircraft; no smoke or fire was visible or being reported by citizens in the area. Curt advised the red and white helicopter was close to where he saw the helicopter go down. The crash site was located shortly after.

After Medical Examiner Investigator and body removal cleared the scene, I assisted Lt. Matthew Palmer, Major Darryl Maylee and Sgt. Jeffrey Harding with securing a plastic tarp over the crash site to help maintain its condition for the arrival of incoming FAA investigators.

End of supplementary report. BKS 403

Supp (Clay Chism) Contact w/ Keith West (10/17/2018 7:30:00 PM)

On October 17, 2018, at approximately 7:30 p.m., I received a direct telephone call from Keith West. I am personally and professionally familiar with Keith and know him to be a credible county citizen.

Keith stated he'd just seen the news report of the helicopter crash and was

sure he was a witness to the onset of the crash. Keith stated at approximately 2:30 p.m., him and his brother, Kevin West, were golfing at the Fulton Country Club. Of geographic reference, the club is a short distance, due west of the crash site. Keith stated the helicopter came over the club at a low altitude, especially for the city. Keith stated as the helicopter continued east, it appeared to be traveling just over the tree lines. Keith stated as the helicopter was nearing the Potawatomi area, he noticed the helicopter was then operating in a small circle. Of reference, Keith's family owns land adjacent to Potawatomi so he is overly familiar with this landmark. Keith stated from the circling motion, he assumed the pilot was merely viewing something of attention. Keith stated just after seeing the helicopter in the circle motion, he heard a loud noise. Keith was adamant the loud noise was while the helicopter was still in air and not of an impact crash noise.

This information was entered into a supplementary report for the reference of federal investigators.

End of report.

Supp (Clay Chism) Contact w/ Jim Barton (10/17/2018 8:13:00 PM)

On October 17, 2018, at approximately 8:15 p.m., I contacted James (Jim) Barton at 7451 State Road C regarding this investigation. Minutes prior, Barton had called the Sheriff's Office requesting contact. Barton's residence is just south of Fulton.

Upon contact with Barton, he advised he'd seen the news and believed he had information regarding to the crash. Barton asked what time the crash occurred, which I advised around 2:30 p.m. Barton was then adamant he had information. Barton stated around that time, him and his wife were alerted to a dark color helicopter flying extremely low over their property. Barton stated the helicopter was "loud" and indicated its presence and altitude seemed off. Barton stated the helicopter was then traveling due south away from Fulton.

This information was entered into a supplementary report for the reference of federal investigators.

End of report.

Supp (Jeffrey Harding) Contact with Flight Instructor BJ Brandehoss (10/18/2018 8:30:00 AM)

On 10/18/2018 at approximately 8:30 AM, I was advised that the flight

instructor who had sent Charles Prather on the solo flight was in the lobby of the sheriff's office. I briefly spoke to BJ Brandehoss. Brandehoss stated asked me if Prather had made it to the Columbia Airport. I told Brandehoss that it was my understanding that Prather had. I confirmed with Brandehoss that he had learned about the crash from his employer who had called the airport and was told that a medical helicopter crew was taking on fuel to search for a downed helicopter. Brandehoss confirmed that was correct. Brandehoss asked about the time of the crash and I told him it was about 2:30 PM. Brandehoss stated that Prather had taken off only 40 minutes prior and he did not think that Prather would have made it to Columbia and then had been returning to Moscow Mills.

I spoke to Brandehoss about he and his employer going out to the crash site and I told him that after federal investigators arrived and reviewed the crash site, he would be contacted and escorted to the site.

I spoke to Brandehoss about removal of the aircraft and let him know that would also have to be discussed.

Brandehoss provided a telephone number of [REDACTED]

End of report

Supp (Jeffrey Harding) Response to Crash Site with FAA, NTSB, Robinson Helicopter Company and Lycoming Industries (10/18/2018 9:30:00 AM)

On 10/18/2018 at approximately 9:30 AM, I responded to Potawatomi where contact was made with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspectors AJ Wahlquist, David Johnson, and Chip Taylor. I escorted the inspectors to the crash site along with Lt Curtis Hall. Upon arrival at the crash site, the FAA Inspectors reviewed the scene. The aircraft registration airworthiness paperwork were turned over to Inspector Taylor.

A short time later, I received information from the Callaway County Joint Communications Center that a citizen called to report finding an item that she believed may have fallen from the helicopter on County Road 101 approximately 1/4 mile north of State Road UU. Inspector Johnson and I responded to County Road 101 and located the item. The item was a plastic fender lining from a vehicle and not related to the helicopter crash.

Upon returning to the crash site, [REDACTED] crash investigators from Robinson Helicopter Company, arrived at the Potawatomi. I escorted the company investigators to the crash site. The company investigators also reviewed the crash scene.

A short time later, [REDACTED] from Lycoming Industries, the engine manufacturer, and Alex Lemishko with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) arrived and I escorted them to the crash site.

It was ultimately determined that Tom and Steve's Towing would respond to lift the aircraft for further inspection. After lifting the aircraft, it was placed on a rollback truck for transport to Tom and Steve's Towing shop facility. I remained with the aircraft until it was secured at the facility.

End of report

Supp (Jakie English) Contact with James Butler (10/18/2018 11:45:00 AM)

On 10/18/2018 at approximately 11:45 AM, I conducted a school patrol at Hatton McCredie Elementary.

While conducting the school patrol, a school custodian, James Butler advised me that he lived in the area of the aircraft crash. Butler advised that he heard a helicopter going over his house in the area of Potawatomi. Butler advised that he heard the engine stall and he stated he looked up at the helicopter. Butler stated that he observed the helicopter going in a spiral motion to the ground. Butler did a hand gesture demonstrating the movement of the helicopter.

End of report.

Supp (Jeffrey Harding) Initial Response (10/18/2018 2:30:00 PM)

On 10/17/2018 at approximately 2:30 PM, I was at the Callaway County Sheriff's Office and overheard radio dispatch of a helicopter crash. Information at the time was that one subject on County Road 108 saw a helicopter flying low east of his residence in a south, southeast direction. That caller reported seeing the helicopter drop below the treetops. There was a second caller on County Road 101 who reported seeing the helicopter flying south of his residence in a south, southeast direction before dropping below the treetops.

I responded to the County Road 101 residence and after making contact with other responding deputies, I responded to Potawatomi park with Maj Darryl Maylee. I searched an area towards the west side of Potawatami Park. At that time, there was an Arch Medivac helicopter flying above me. That helicopter appeared to be directing me back to the west. I noted the the helicopter was flying extremely low as if to land. I came out of the clearing and observed the helicopter in a low hover to my west. I went to the area were the

helicopter was hovering and found the downed aircraft in a clearing at approximately 3:15 PM. The downed helicopter was laying on its left side. The nose of the helicopter was crushed and in a small impact crater.

I observed a white male subject outside of the helicopter. The subject was deceased. I noted that the subject was laying face down with his head near the hub of the rotor. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I made a radio broadcast that I had located the crash site and had located one deceased subject. I provided my location using the Arch Helicopter as a reference point as it was still circling overhead.

Upon reviewing the crash further, I noted that both main rotor blades were damaged but attached to the aircraft. The tail boom was damaged but still attached to the aircraft. I observed the horizontal and vertical stabilizers were intact but detached from the tail boom. The stabilizers were on the ground near the end of the tail boom. I observed that the tail rotor was intact but detached from the tail boom. The tail rotor was on the ground near the end of the tail boom. I noted that one antenna was detached from the aircraft and laying about ten feet away. Also near the detached antenna was a piece of window fairing.

I observed several pieces of the windshield to the south and west of the aircraft. That small debris field was consistent with the windshield blowing out forward when the helicopter crashed.

I further noted a strong odor of motor fuel and a brush truck was dispatched to the area for a standby.

Other officers, including Sheriff Clay Chism arrived at the crash site. Sheriff Chism located a wallet on the deceased subject. The subject was identified as Charles Prather, [REDACTED] I obtained the tail number from the aircraft, N923SH. Sheriff Chism took a call from BJ Brandehoss, a flight instructor, who reported that Prather was flying solo to the Columbia Regional Airport for training.

I recovered a set of [REDACTED] car keys that were on the ground immediately adjacent to the decedent. I also recovered the aircraft registration and airworthiness paperwork and a cell phone from inside the damaged front part of the aircraft. The cell phone was completely destroyed. Sheriff Chism turned the wallet over to me. The wallet, keys, and cell phone will be held for safekeeping.

Medical Examiner's Investigator Dori Burke arrived on scene along with personnel from Maupin Funeral Home. After Investigator Burke took photographs

of the decedent and the scene, were flipped the body over. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I then assisted other deputies with covering the helicopter with a tarp before departing the scene.

End of report

Supp (Kevin Foley) Autopsy (10/19/2018 10:00:00 AM)

On 10-19-18 at about 10 AM I, Sgt. Foley #414 attended the autopsy of Charles Prather, Jr [REDACTED] at the Boone-Callaway Medical Examiner's Office in Columbia. The autopsy was conducted by forensic pathologist Dr. Carl Stacy. He was assisted by technicians Jason Stuart and Scott Noble.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Federal Aviation Administration confirmed the aircraft belonged to Spitzer Helicopter Leasing and it was being flown by Prather who was training on a solo flight to earn his helicopter pilot's license the day of the incident.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dr. Stacy advised that pending toxicology, his preliminary opinion is the cause of death was due to major blunt force trauma caused by an aviation incident, and the manner of death is accidental. End of report.