



National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety – Central Region

Interview Summary: Mr. Cameron Wagler – CEN20LA401

Date: April 30, 2021

Location: via telephone

Interviewers: Courtney Liedler - NTSB, Central Region

Interviewee: {name}

During the Interview, Mr. Wagler stated the following:

He had worked this event in the past, it is part of the Flying Squirrels program which is sponsored by the flight training center in Kokomo. The program meets monthly and is a way for kids between ages 14 to 18 to get introductory training.

Mr. Wagler arrived at the airport after the church service that was held there. They had just started getting everything set up for the day. It was still slow, not a lot of people were there yet. It was him, the two other boys (that were onboard the airplane with him), and other volunteers. There were about 20 volunteers in total. When it was slow, pilots offer to give the volunteers rides in the airplanes to encourage them to come back again and volunteer the next year. The pilot offered to take the three boys on a flight. They were one of the first flights of the day.

Mr. Wagler spoke to the pilot before the flight, “just small talk” and the pilot gave the boys an emergency briefing on how to open the doors. The three boys decided where to sit. Mr. Wagler volunteered to sit in the back because he had flown with the pilot the summer prior on a trip to Muncie, Indiana. Liam also sat in the back because he had flown before and Reece sat in the front since it was his first flight with the pilot. They were going to complete a “big loop” around the town in an extended pattern and return. They took off on runway 18 and came back to land on runway 18 again. He was seated in the aft right seat. He saw the powerlines, but they were at a bit of an angle from his view. At the last minute, he realized they were not going to make it over the power lines. The pilot did not say anything before hitting the wires, there was no discussion on final approach and the pilot had control of the airplane until the impact. Reece was sitting in his seat and not touching the controls, he had been in the Flying Squirrels for a couple years and Mr. Wagler estimated Reece had about 5 hours of flight time. The engine was running and “everything with the airplane appeared to be working fine.”

Mr. Wagler woke up in the airplane; it was inverted, and he thought he was in a dream. He unbuckled his seatbelt (lap belt only) and crawled out. Mr. Wagler said he was not sure where crawled out from, he saw a hole and crawled out of it. He knew the hole was to his left and thought maybe it was the baggage or passenger door. Once clear of the airplane, he stood up and walked into the corn field away from the airplane. A 4-wheeler was arriving, and he walked toward it and sat down on it.

He was at the event for most of the day before and left just before dinner. He was helping passengers into and out of the airplanes. The accident pilot flew the day prior; Mr. Wagler was not particularly paying attention to the pilots flights. They were used runway 18 some of the time the day before, when the winds favored it.

Mr. Wagler had flown with the pilot previously without any problems. Mr. Wagler stated he did not have any hesitation to fly with the pilot; he trusted him and believed he was thorough and had attention to detail. The other two boys did not voice any concerns or seem hesitant to fly with the pilot either. Mr. Wagler did not believe the pilot had any medical issues at the time of the accident; the pilot “seemed fine” on the accident flight. He presumed that maybe the pilot had an obstruction in seeing the power lines since it was a low wing airplane because nothing else seemed abnormal.

Mr. Wagler has his private pilot’s license. He had about 74 hours total time at the time of the accident and has flown one hour since the accident. He has flown into the accident airport and has about 20 hours of dual instruction flying in and out of there on both runway 18 and 36. He has not had any trouble landing on either runway. He knows the powerlines are there and is cautious of them but has never had any problems. Mr. Wagler thought the power lines were marked with orange balls, but said he mostly uses the poles to judge his approach height; he tries to stay higher than the pole to make sure he was clear of the power lines.