



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jason Aguilera
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

On October 22, 2021, a telephone interview was conducted with Mark Sturm, a friend and flight instructor for the accident pilot in N628RS. We began by discussing the build of the airplane. I mentioned that the airplane appeared to be meticulously built. Mr. Sturm agreed that the airplane was well built with attention to detail. I mentioned that due to the impact damages, I could not confirm that the AVMAPS display was equipped with an attitude heading reference system (AHRS) to provide an attitude directional indicator (ADI). Mr. Sturm responded that the unit could display an ADI. The accident pilot/owner had installed an autopilot about a year ago. Since then, the flight instructor was demonstrating to the pilot that the automated system holds a heading or track better than hand flying, and the advantages to using the system. There were some initial problems with the autopilot installation, but they were worked out.

During instructional flights getting ready for the cross-country flight, Mr. Sturm instructed the pilot in unusual attitudes. He used a vision-restricting training device "Foggles" to assist in the pilot's training to use instruments during climbs and maintaining headings. The flight instructor was concerned with the accident pilot's weather experience knowing that the weather in Wisconsin would be much different than the weather in New Mexico. The pilot was a VFR pilot and normally flew when the weather was perfect. During the instructional flights, Mr. Sturm, assessed the pilot's decision-making abilities and found him to be logical, thoughtful, and conscientious. For example, to improve his flying abilities, the pilot would ask the instructor to fly with him and suggest how he could improve. During their training, Mr. Sturm, did cover the aspects of Special VFR and discussed how it was a tool to be used for helping a pilot land in less than VFR weather. The instructor never implied that it should be used for takeoff and departure purposes.

The flight instructor was aware that the accident pilot mission planned the flight to and from Wisconsin. They had discussed the prevailing weather in Wisconsin a few days prior to the accident flight.

---END---