

Laura Abraham
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: June 5, 2023

Subject: CEN23FA220, Gibbon, NE

Contact: Stephanie Wells - Friend/Flight Instructor of the pilot and co-owner of accident airplane

Ms. Wells stated that the pilot, John Reading, was a friend of hers and co-owner of the accident airplane, N977RV. She said Mr. Reading began flying again regularly about five years ago after not flying for 30 years. After obtaining his tailwheel endorsement, Ms. Wells gave him some instruction in the accident airplane. Mr. Reading became a co-owner in the airplane in October 2022 and completed his required insurance checkout in the RV-7 in early December 2022. Ms. Wells stated that Mr. Reading had about 60 hours in the accident airplane and received periodic training from her that included landings, mountain flying, and instrument flying.

It was her understanding that Mr. Reading was traveling to the Washington, DC area to visit friends and anticipated being gone about 10 days. The day before the accident, Ms. Wells and Mr. Reading flew together and practiced some instrument approaches in the Denver, Colorado area. She said that Mr. Reading wanted to be "prepared and instrument current" before traveling to the East Coast. Ms. Wells stated that while Mr. Reading did not have a lot of current practice flying in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), he did log quite a bit of IMC time in his Cessna 182 during a summer trip to the East Coast, but she was unsure of the year.

Ms. Wells stated that Mr. Reading's wife passed away in early May, and he told Ms. Wells that he was not going to fly for a little while because he did not want to be distracted while he flew. Ms. Wells said that she thinks Mr. Reading began flying again about two weeks after his wife's passing. Mr. Reading told Ms. Wells he was

going to begin flying again because it was therapeutic for him. Ms. Wells stated that she felt Mr. Reading was in a "good state," and that he took safety seriously.