

On July 20, 2023 around 0939 hours I, Interim Airport Manager John Davis was at the Midwest National Air Center. Airport Staff also present were David Squire, Trevor Dunnivant, Keaton Fisher and Elizabeth Williams.

At this time Staff and other Airport Visitors were watching as a plane owned by Tom Reed was taking off from the Midwest National Air Center.

The plane was a 1974 Piper Navaho PA31, Tail Number N200RA. It was purchased by Mr. Tom Reed, [REDACTED] in December of 2022 and housed in Heated Maintenance Hangar 1 at the Midwest National Air Center.

Today the plane was to depart the Midwest National Air Center for Wichita, Kansas where it would be permanently based.

Mr. Reed has been in the process of fixing the planes mechanical issues so he could have it flown back to Wichita closer to his home. When Mr. Reed purchased the plane from a private owner it was located in a field east of the Midwest National Air Center. The previous owner had been evicted years prior from the airport for none payment of rent and moved the plane to the field with an arrangement made with the owner of the field.

Today Mr. Reed, his wife Cathy, two children, pilot (Doug Moller), and mechanic. Showed up to leave for Wichita.

The plane was fueled at the self-serve pumps with 18.53 gallons of 100LL. (Copy of receipt attached.)

Airport Attendants Trevor Dunnivant and Keaton Fisher said the plane had a fuel leak at that time but Mr. Reed and the people with him were aware of it and I assume they were fixing it.

Around 0900 to 0930 hours, I saw the plane running at the fuel pumps both engines. Airport Staff were outside as it was entering the taxiway towards the south end of the runway. Airport Attendants Trevor Dunnivant and Keaton Fisher along with Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Williams were in the Airport Truck between the runway and taxiway watching and videoing the take off. Since this was to be a momentous occasion of the plane that people stated would never take off. Airport Attendant David Squire, Tennant Blaine Laux, and I were in front of the Terminal Building watching the take off. I have a short video of the plane as it was in my view from the terminal. I lost view of it as it past the "T" Hangars.

I then walked to the end of the A Row "T" Hangar because I didn't see if the plane went left or right as left the runway. As I walked to the end of the Hangar I saw a cloud of dark black smoke northwest of the airport, possibly a mile or less away. Trevor and Keaton then approached me in the truck and said he didn't ascend and Trevor called 911. He indicated that the 911 operator said someone already called in the crash. I then ran back into the Terminal Building and called Kansas City Approach. I informed them we had a plane crash northwest of the airport and to close the airport for all air traffic. When I entered the Terminal, I asked David Squire to call in the NOTAM to close the airport due to the crash.

I then left the airport and traveled towards the smoke cloud. I found the crash site near Cordell Road and NE 150th Street. Kearney Fire Department, Kearney Police, and Clay County Sheriff's Department were already on scene. Tom Reed and his mechanic were also on scene. I was informed by a Kearney Police Officer Charles Leach that the pilot was deceased. Tom Reed asked if I could find his wife, Cathy

Midwest National Air Center

and have here respond to the scene. He said the pilot was a family friend. I informed him if I found her I would stay at the airport. I made contact with Deputies on scene and informed them I would respond back to the airport.

When I arrived back at the airport I found Cathy Reed and her two children. Mrs. Reed and I met in the Pilot Lounge and I informed her that the pilot, identified as Doug Moller, was killed in the crash. I also asked her to stay at the airport until we heard from her husband.

A witness, Jay Selanders was at the airport and saw the plane, I am not aware of his exact location at the time of the crash, but he did leave his name and phone number for the investigation. (Jay Selanders, [REDACTED])

Shortly after I was given a note from Elizabeth Williams to contact Tony with the FAA at [REDACTED]. At 1010 hours I returned the phone call and gave Tony what information I had. He informed me that FAA and NTSB investigators would be contacting me in a few minutes. At 1120 hours I was contacted by Tony again. He informed me that Sgt. Johnson with the Clay County Sheriff's Office gave them the information they needed. I asked Tony at what point I could reopen the airport. Tony said he would have an NTSB investigator contact me.

At 1120 hours I was contacted by NTSB Investigator Andrew Finne. He informed me that he and FAA investigators would be flying in tomorrow, July 21, 2023.

At 1202 hours FAA Supervisor Doug Jackson contacted me and informed me I could open the airport at my discretion.

Around 1200 hours Detective Rachel Holiman came into the airport she was provided copies of statements and requested videos of taken by staff of the plane be sent to her. Sgt. Chris Johnson asked that we keep air space closed until the body could be removed from the scene.

I obtained videos taken by Trevor Dunnivant, Keaton Fisher and myself of the plane take off and emailed them to Detective Holiman. I also forwarded two videos of the plane leaking fuel taken by Trevor Dunnivant and Keaton Fisher.

At 1334 hours I was contacted by Detective Holiman and was given the all clear to reopen the airport. Shortly after I contacted KC Approach and informed them. David Squire canceled the active NOTAM.

At the request of FAA and NTSB Investigators the fuel farm was shut down as a part of the investigation process. NOTAM No. 07/444.

[REDACTED]

NOTAM FORM

7-20-23

We pulled the aircraft
put fuel in it. It taxied
to 36 to take off,
the front wheel was
not off the ground
by the time it passed
hanger A row after
that point I lost sight
of the Aircraft.

David Squier



TO CANCEL NOTAM, CALL FLIGHT SERVICE AT # 1-877-437-5007

NOTAM NUMBER David Squier D3

CANCELLED WITH Fort Worth AL

TIME 1:34 AM ☒ PM

DATE 7/20/23

FOR MORE INFO, CALL 1-800-WX-SERVICE

07/20/23

Happened

around

9:30 AM

Reed took the plane to fuel farm to get fuel. Right side was leaking. Waited for leak to die down and prepared for takeoff. Trevor, Keaton and I went down to the grass between runways to watch plane takeoff. Reed's pilot took to runway 36. He ended up having to use the entire runway before gaining some altitude and getting off the ground. To us, Reed's pilot did not have enough power as he was going down the runway at a speed that seemed not fast enough. As we watched we noticed he did not have enough altitude. We all made the comment that it did not look good and that he should have not continued and rather of braked. We watched as he barely cleared over the tree line before veering to the left and slowly going down to the point we could no longer see the plane. Shortly after we saw black smoke.

Elizabeth Williams

08/22/23

Keaton Fisher

Date 7/20/2023

Tom asks me to pull the plane from the
hangar and add fuel. 18.53 Gallons was
added and fuel was observed leaking
from cowlings which was a problem
before but was never fixed. 2-3 Gallons
leaked. Once the leak stopped, engines
were started, the aircraft taxied onto
the runway without a runup. The
aircraft accelerated at an unusually slow
rate taking up the entire runway
and showing no sign of a positive
rate of climb. aircraft headed north
then quickly turned to the west
before disappearing behind the trees

Trevor Dunnivant

Trevor

07-20-23

Pulled plane out to fuel. Topped off both tanks. Right fuel tank started leaking fuel rapidly. They waited till the leak slowed down/stopped before taking off. Went to take off and he used 100% of the runway. Lifted off within the last 100 foot of the end of Runway. veered to the right as he lifted off. Poor climb performance. Barely cleared the trees out in the fields. Didn't try to keep climbing straight, decided to bank left. Still wasn't gaining altitude, and we lost sight of him from trees. Shortly after we saw a dark cloud of smoke rising up. Ran to the truck and followed the smoke.