

Erie Town Fair Balloon Rally, Reschedule Dates July 14th–July 16th, 2023

Flight summary for Friday July 14, 2023

Pilot, Kenneth P. Bradley D.O.B. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Commercial Pilot, Certificate [REDACTED], Issued 24 February 2020, Lighter Than Air Balloon, Limited to Hot Air Balloons with Airborne Heater.

Balloon, N 895 FA Adams AB-120, 135,000 cu ft envelope, Serial Number 279, date of manufacture April 2021 flown over Aerostar CWS Bottom Basket 51650-4,. complete system weight ready to fly full of fuel is 890 pounds. Total lift capacity at 5,000' MSL at 60°F ambient temperature is 2070 pounds with a maximum envelope temperature of 250°F, or 1200 pounds of passengers.

Manifest: a total 5 people total on board, 4 passengers, (1) pilot. Passenger manifest included (1) Hot Air Affair LLC., paid passenger, (2) event sponsor passenger, (1) event volunteer crew passenger. Total combined passenger weight including pilot was approximately 900 pounds

Launch Location: Colliers Hill open field west of Erie High School, North West corner of the intersection of County Road 5 and Colliers Parkway with a field elevation of 5100' msl.

Landing Location: SRM Concrete, [REDACTED] Lafayette, CO 80026

Flight duration was 25 minutes with approximately 6 miles of distance covered, we observed a maximum ground speed of 27 mph and reached a maximum altitude of 1200 AGL, 6200 MSL.

11:25z: Arrive at launch location, check in with event organizer,

11:30z: Pilots briefing, red zone map discussion, misc discussions concerning flying the area, airport communications, passenger/sponsor assignments, volunteer crew assignments and weather briefing.

12:00z: Pilots final weather briefing, winds light and variable, temp 58*, DP 48* alt 30.01 visibility 10 miles sky conditions clear. Discussion about an occluded front stalled out over the KGXY area, front was predicted to be in the KEIK area between 14:30z and 15:00z with increased winds predicted to be starting at that point. Flight was conducted under Part 91 Rules, pilots discretion, it was suggested that flights be kept low and to only fly for 30-45 minutes with plans to be back on the ground and packed up no later than 14:00z.

12:15z: The decision was made that we could make a safe flight based off the information provided during the pilots briefing. We unloaded the balloon and prepped it for inflation. During inflation I did my walk around inspections to verify the integrity of the aircraft and continued with inflation bringing the balloon to equilibrium. I asked my passengers to get into the basket and I proceeded with passenger briefings.

12:43z: We removed the tie off system and launched for the flight.

12:45z: Once airborne I looked at my instruments which indicated that we were traveling at 17mph; I ascended in search of calmer winds to determine the best flight and landing options. Our maximum altitude was 6200' MSL during which we experienced speeds ranging from 17mph to 27mph.

13:00z: After assessing the wind at different altitudes, I determined landing was the safest option so I started searching for a safe landing area that was large enough to accommodate a high wind landing. I re-briefed my passengers for a high wind landing with specific instructions to hang on, get down in the basket and stay in the basket. I began to execute my protocol for high wind landings by descending at approximately 200 feet per minute to contouring height prior to reaching my intended landing location. Once on final approach, I descended to make contact with the ground for my final landing, the basket made contact with the ground and began to drag at which point one passenger was ejected from the basket. Having lost the weight of the passenger the balloon became airborne rising approximately 50-60 feet into the air. Throughout the landing I continued to release air through the top vent which resulted in the balloon returning to the ground. The balloon again began to drag along the ground until coming to a rest.

I had been in communication with my crew via 2 way radios during the entire flight and they were aware of my location via Glympse gps application on our phones. Phone communication on the ground had been lost as a result of my phone being bounced out of the basket during the first contact with the ground.

Once safely on the ground I established communication with the site manager of SRM Concrete to get directions for our crew to get to use and instructed them to call 911 and request medical assistance for the passengers, I immediately returned to the basket and remained with the passengers help prevent any further injuries.

Once the passengers were transported via ambulance or released from the scene by authorities my ground crew and I remained on location until the NTSB and the FAA arrived, I cooperated with the Lafayette Police Department, the NTSB and the FAA, once the initial investigation was completed the aircraft was released to me at which point my crew proceeded to remove it from the fence, inspected it and assessed any damage the balloon was then packed back into the trailer that it is hauled in.