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Date: August 3, 2023

Subject: CEN23LA345, Record of Conversation

Contact: Mark Howard, Pilot of N38483

During a telephone conversation, Mark Howard stated that he was a student pilot. He said the purpose of the flight was time building, and the accident flight was his third solo cross-country flight. The accident flight was his first flight to Grier Airport (5C1), Bourne, Texas. When asked what led to not having enough fuel to arrive at the planned destination airport, he said was "pushing it on time" because people had reserved the airplane for 1600 central daylight time and there was a headwind during the return flight. He said he increased engine power for the return flight. During the return flight, he looked at the fuel quantity, and it was dropping rapidly, and he decided to land at Lane Airpark (T54), Rosenberg, Texas. When he was at the opposite end of T54, the engine "sputtered" and quit. He said he wanted to land as soon as possible, and the aircraft "built up a lot of speed." He landed the aircraft at T54 with a tailwind and "slammed on the brakes" to try to slow the aircraft down as soon as possible.

Mark Howard said he departed from Pearland Regional Airport (LVJ), Houston, Texas, with full aircraft fuel tanks and landed at 5C1. At 5C1, he used the restrooms. He said that at 5C1, the aircraft fuel tanks were $\frac{3}{4}$ full based on looking at the cockpit fuel gauge indications. He said he did not visually check the fuel tanks through the fuel filler ports. When asked how he would know if the fuel gauges were accurate, he said "that's a good question." When asked what his flight instructor told him on how to check fuel quantity, he said he was told to visually check fuel quantity within each fuel tank. He said his return flight to LVJ was supposed to be 1:38-1:40 hours in duration and the power setting was set at 2,700 - 2,800 rpm. When asked if he had

the engine power set to maximum power, he said it was almost at maximum power and maximum power was 3,000 rpm. He said that the throttle control was not fully forward and when the throttle control is fully forward the engine indication is 3,000 rpm. He said that when the engine quit, both fuel gauges indicated empty. He said his flight instructor was Josh Harriman and Josh Harriman was part of the flying club. When asked if there was a club requirement for minimum fuel, he said all the airplanes are topped off when they return from a flight. When asked if there was a minimum fuel requirement for student pilot solo flights at intermediate airports, he said there were none that he was aware of. When asked why he did not perform a straight-in-landing if the aircraft was running out of fuel, he said he did not make a straight-in landing at T54 because he thought he had a little more time, the aircraft was too high, the aircraft was a little too fast, and he did not feel comfortable forcing the landing.

Mark Howard said when he planned the solo cross-country flight using Foreflight, he had over 40 minutes of fuel reserve and the flight time from LVJ to 5C1 was about 1:38 hours and from 5C1 to LVJ was about 1:38 hours. When asked what power setting he used in his preflight planning, he said he planned for 110 kts and he had a 7 kt tailwind flying to 5C1 and during the return he had a headwind and had trouble maintaining 110 kts. He said aircraft altitude on the return flight was 7,000 ft msl. When asked why he did not fly the aircraft at a lower altitude due to the headwind, he said did not go to a lower altitude because it was a really hot day. When he flew at 4,500 ft msl to 5C1, it was turbulent, so he decided to fly at a higher altitude for the return flight.

Mark Howard said that his flight instructor knew that he was going to fly the accident flight, and he talked to his flight instructor earlier on the day of the accident. When asked if his flight instructor reviewed the fuel consumption calculations, Mark Howard said he discussed it in person with his instructor, but there was no "pulled paper or anything."

When asked how he manages engine power, Mark Howard said it's usually pitch for airspeed and power for altitude. He was then asked during a cross country flight how does he set power, he said he tries to maintain an airspeed. He said he tried to maintain airspeed and altitude during the return flight, and he had to increase engine power to maintain airspeed and altitude. When asked if he would get in trouble if he returned the aircraft late, he said probably not and he had not been late before and did not want to return late with students and instructors waiting for the aircraft. He said he got too fixed on the goal and had get there itis.