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Office of Aviation Safety

Date: July 3, 2024

Subject: CEN24FA243 - Consolidated Witness Interviews

This is a summary of witness interviews gathered during the on-site investigation:

Bryce Meitle - Oberlin, Kansas - Airport Manager

The airport manager of the Oberlin Municipal Airport was about 6 nautical miles northwest of the accident site an hour prior and stated that the area had dense fog and he was unable to make out the top of the grain elevator in town. He had spoken to the pilot and informed them that the weather was low ceilings and visibility, and he did not know when the weather would improve. He provided a copy of text messages received and sent to the passenger along with a call log on the day of the accident.

Mark Ostmeyer - Colby, Kansas - Family Friend

The family friend reported that he assumed they would be overnight in Colby based on the telephone conversation he had with the pilot while on the ground in Phillipsburg, Kansas. He stated that the pilot was very conservative and would never fly if he was worried about the weather.

Jamie Treat - Elbert, Colorado - A&P and Family Friend

Mr. Treat provided the airplane records and build logs when they restored the airplane. Mr. Treat described the pilot and passenger as very conservative when it

came to flying their Waco. The pilot would not fly into any type of low visibility or moisture and often would divert for weather below his personal minimums. The pilot and passenger were never the type to push and were just as happy to leave the airplane at an airport hangared enroute and come back later to retrieve when the weather favored flying to the destination. The pilot and passenger took extremely good care of the Waco and the pilot flew it often to stay current. The passenger was a glider pilot and would relieve the pilot enroute and help with planning and navigation. Mr. Treat also stated that they were enroute to Colby, Kansas to overnight with a friend while on their way back from the annual Waco fly-in to switch out personal items before Oshkosh.

Well Drilling Rig Crew - Selden, Kansas

During the on-site accident investigation, it was observed that there was a drilling rig about half mile from the accident site. The crew reported they were unaware of the accident due to the dense fog which made them unable to see the top of their derrick. They did not hear the accident due to the noise of the rig and did not see any explosion flashes due to the density of the fog.

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