

Andrew Finne
Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety

Date: August 28, 2024

Subject: CEN24FA326 - Witness Interview

This is a summary of a telephone interview with a family friend of the pilot.

The family friend was contacted by the pilot about 0830 while he was airborne over Yankton, South Dakota. The pilot told the friend that he was stuck and could not find a place to land due to not being an instrument pilot. The friend suggested Albion Municipal Airport in Albion, Nebraska to the southwest stating that the AWOS showed VFR conditions. He stayed on the phone with him for about 10 to 15 minutes before ending the call. A few minutes later around 0842 he texted the pilot stating that Columbus, Nebraska was also a VFR option. He also stated that the weather that morning was low clouds and a strong wind from the west around the time he called. He also stated that the pilot seemed calm and did not mention if he was in instrument conditions.

The friend helped the pilot build the airplane and was hangar buddies with him. He recalled that the airplane was equipped with an electric trim, altimeter, and maybe one other gyro instrument.

END