

February 25, 2023

Mr. Ryder Yocum
Federal Aviation Administration

Re: N3645W – PA32-260 Accident at KRVS on February 23, 2023

Mr. Yocum

This letter is in response for your request to document the account of the airplane accident that occurred on Friday, February 23, 2023.

On a return flight from Paradise Haven Airport (39OK) to Riverside Airport (KRVS), I was cleared by KRVS ATC to land on 1R at approximately 3:45p. Due to the crosswinds as I approached the runway, I was crabbed into the wind and crossed the center of the runway. As I approached my touchdown point, I was pressing on the right rudder to exit the crab, with left wing slightly down I pulled the power to idle and began my flair. As I was just about to touchdown, the flaps handle, which were in full (40 degrees) position, released to the floor and the airplane dropped to the runway abruptly. It is my belief that I did not engage the trigger button (pin) fully since I may have placed my thumb on the button when engaging. When I touched down, I was extremely right on the runway, pointing right, and in danger of hitting runway markers and the grass. So, my corrective action to avoid the hazards was to apply a hard left rudder. The airplane abruptly turned left and began skidding down the runway towards the left side of the runway headed towards other signage hazards. I attempted to correct with my right rudder but there was little response due to the skid. I immediately added full throttle to determine if I could establish enough speed to produce lift for a go-around. I determined my airspeed was not adequate to execute the go-around and didn't want to further endanger the passenger on-board and those around Christianson Aviation Jet Center; which is where the airplane was tracking, by attempting to lift off. Therefore, I made the hard decision to abort the go-around attempt, pulled the power to idle, applied brakes while attempting to avoid any collision with the hazards (lights, markers, etc.) entering into the grassy null. The airplane continued sliding until the front nose gear collapsed causing the propeller to strike the ground forcing the engine to a stop. As the airplane came to a stop, the right wing tipped touching the ground and then the airplane came back to a level position.

ATC acknowledged that help was on the way, I turned off the fuel, avionics, key and master and we began our evacuation procedures from the aircraft.

Mark Bender

Certificate Number: [REDACTED]