



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Todd Gunther
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: December 16, 2016
Subject: Interview with Lee Kraus Jr.
NTSB Accident Number: ERA17CA068

Mr. Kraus was interviewed by telephone.

Mr. Kraus, stated that “I commute down from Connecticut.” During the flight, down to Spruce Creek, the left-hand passenger window had air coming through, and his spouse complained that it was cold.

On the day of the accident, he had “some down time,” so he looked at the airplane to ascertain where the air was coming into the cabin from. He looked at the window on the left side and could see a gap between the window and the airframe. He latched it closed and then took some paper towels, rolled them up, and put them into the gap. He then put painters tape over the gap between the openable window and the airframe on the outside of the airplane.

He then took off, and on downwind after leveling off at 800 feet, he heard a “whoosh.” When he looked back, he realized that the window had opened about 2 to 3 inches. He then turned on the autopilot in the heading/altitude mode. Moments later, the window opened again, this time fully. He then tried to close it again, and when he turned forward realized that the airplane was heading for the ground and he saw powerlines in front of him.

Mr. Kraus added that he must have bumped the autopilot off, and that when he saw the powerlines, he decided to “put the airplane on the ground” rather than attempt to pull up and clear the powerlines which could have resulted in a stall.