



Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: November 23, 2016

To: Steve Davidson, ASI, ATL- FSDO
J.D Nichols, ASI, ATL-FSDO

From: Chris Grotewohl, Central Region NextGen Branch, ACE-220

Prepared by: Chris Grotewohl, ACE-220

Subject: November 16, 2016 Curtiss Jenny fatal accident inspector statement

At or around 1700 at the Peach State Airport:

Ron Alexander did a preflight inspection on the aircraft. I remember looking at the propeller and attach points for the ailerons, rudder and elevator. Other than not much more, I wasn't familiar with other components etc...

We helped Ron tie lines to his truck and pulled the Jenny out of the hanger. It was in sideways with rollers under each wheel and tail skid. We took it to a fuel tank and put on some fuel. We then hand pushed the aircraft to the grass runway facing it north. The winds were calm.

Larry Enlow said to get in and Ron stated the Jenny will not glide far so we'll stay above the runway. All strapped in, the engine was hand propped and it fired on the first attempt. Appeared to be running smooth, Ron let it warm up and then did an engine run up.

The ground crews were on each wing while we gave it power. When we had some rudder authority the ground crew left. It appeared the takeoff roll was 2-300'. We headed to the North and climbed to 1000' I'm estimating while orbiting the airport, Ron shook the stick and I did some straight and level and turns. I gave it back to Ron and we set up for a landing to the South. I never heard the engine miss a beat or nor did I ever smell fuel.

The landing was smooth and Ron kept enough power in to make it back without losing rudder authority and until the ground crew could assist with turning. I believe the flight was maybe 10-15 minutes from chock to chock but maybe shorter.

We came to a stop and were spun around facing north. I got out and Larry got in. After Larry got strapped in, they took off. Note: I had a GoPro that I used on my flight but only filmed a portion of their take off.

The engine sounded good and it appeared to be a normal lift off. However, it didn't seem like they climbing as well as when I was in the aircraft earlier, but maybe my imagination. When I saw them slowly turning cross wind, it looked like they leveled off at a lower altitude also. I shut the camera off. I turned my back for a second and I heard folks scream fire. When I turned around, the front end was engulfed in flames. It became very quiet because folks were in disbelief and hoping they could make it.

I didn't hear the engine anymore and figured Ron had shut the fuel off, but what I could hear were the flames in the wind. It was apparent to me they would not make it. As the aircraft turned towards the south, the fire appeared to have spread and a portion of the wings were also on fire. It then appeared to have fallen rapidly into the trees, and burnt.

According to the time on my phone, I called FAA dispatch at 1746 to report it. The wreckage was burning at that time so they must have crashed at 1740 or close to it.

Although their deaths had not been confirmed yet, I knew.