



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Brian C. Rayner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

December 28, 2016

Subject: ERA17FA073
Name: Robert Oehl – Flight School Owner/Instructor

Mr. Oehl was the owner/operator of the flight school where the accident pilot received his primary flight instruction. He was interviewed by telephone, and the following is a summary of the interview.

According to Mr. Oehl, the accident pilot “pushed his training as hard as he could, and cut corners wherever he could.” According to school records, the accident pilot scored a 73 on his FAA private pilot written exam. The pilot passed his practical exam on April 1, 2014 at 45.3 total hours of flight experience. According to Mr. Oehl, as soon as he passed his practical exam, the accident pilot purchased the accident airplane.

The accident pilot later built a hangar on his property and kept his airplane there, but he continued to fly in and out of Keystone Airpark (42J). Mr. Oehl said that he watched the accident pilot depart 42J with his family on multiple occasions in weather that was “below VFR minimums.” He said he counseled the pilot numerous times about operating the airplane VFR in IMC conditions. Most recently, he counseled the pilot two weeks prior to the accident.

According to Mr. Oehl, “I’ve been flying for more than 40 years, and I tried to explain to him the history of pilots with an anti-authority attitude. It’s an attitude that catches up with you. He was a low-time, flat-land pilot with no mountain experience. There was an AIRMET for mountain obscuration that day, I mean, there was plenty of information out there.”

When asked why he thought the accident pilot departed on the accident flight with those conditions along his route of flight, Mr. Oehl said, “I counseled him numerous times about taking instrument training and getting an instrument rating. Lots of us around here did. He couldn’t be bothered. He would just draw that pink line on his iPad, and go.”