

Here are the following statements from Golden Eagle Aviation Line Service Technicians Tommy Turner, Connor Owens and FBO Manager Thomas Day.

Tommy Turner:

On July 1, 2017 at 9:45-10:00am a Piper Aztec with tail # N44HJ landed at Moton Field to receive fuel. Fuel services to their airplane began around 10:11am and lasted for about 15-20mins. They received about 45 gallons of AVGAS. Once I finished with their fuel services and got their payment they proceeded to go out of the door and load the airplane. When they were all loaded in the airplane the pilot tried getting the engines to start, but they wouldn't start after about 5-7 minutes of trying. I walked up to the plane and asked "is everything was okay and do you need any assistance". He responded by saying "no we're good... she (the plane) does this when the engines get too hot". Then he tried for a few more minutes before getting my attention and asking did we have a battery charger I told him "no, but we could use the airport vehicles to charge the battery". He connected everything and we tried that for a few minutes. The charge was enough to get the left engine going, but the right still wouldn't turn over. By this time one of our on field tenants Matthew Smith, owner of "Skydive the South" offered his assistance and also said that he had an actual battery charger that we could use. So I and my co-worker Connor Owens used the Lektro to pull the Aztec to the T-hangers where Matt was located with the battery charger, and once we got it into position Matt pulled out the battery charge, connected it and the gauge read that it would take 2 hours for it to charge. When they heard the time needed to allow the battery charge they opted to use the crew car to go and get them something to eat from Auburn, AL. We made a copy of their license, and then they loaded in the van to leave to find a restaurant. I got off at 2:30pm.

Connor Owens:

Saturday, July 1st around 11 o'clock in the morning; I arrived at the airport for work. When I came through the main gate, I immediately noticed the Piper Aztec parked in front of the terminal. After I parked my car, I walked towards the other lineman (Tommy) on the opposite side waiting for the battery to charge on the Aztec. I greeted Tommy, and he told me the battery had died on the aircraft. After talking to Tommy, I walked around the wing towards the door of the aircraft where I saw the pilot. During the time, his wife and two kids were playing around the airplane.

I greeted the pilot, and asked him "Was this common for this aircraft", and he stated, "It's common for this particular engine especially when it's hot". Tommy was called away so I stayed to continue to watch the aircraft. The pilot then proceeded to start the left engine. It took a few tries before it finally cranked. Once it was running, he signaled me to disconnect the jumper cables, so I did and drove the vehicle back to the parking spot. As I was driving off he attempted to start the right engine. After parking the vehicle, I went back to the FBO and watched the pilot through the window make several attempts to start the right engine. By that time his whole family was already aboard the aircraft. He tried to start the right engine for 20-30 minutes while the left engine was running before he decided to shut down.

He and his family walked into the FBO and requested to use the crew car for lunch. He also asked me if I could tow his aircraft next to the T-hangars so he could use the skydiver's battery charger to charge the plane while he and his family went to lunch. He watched Tommy and I tow his aircraft to the skydiver's hangar, we all walked back inside the FBO together, I gave his wife the keys to the crew car while he went to use the restroom. His wife had commented that it was normal for the airplane not to start in hot temperatures, and that they have been stuck at airports before in the past due to the engines not starting. When he came out the restroom, they all left for lunch.

They came back around an hour or so later. He handed me the keys and told me he may stop by for fuel on the way back to Tennessee. He and his family boarded the airplane, the Skydivers disconnected the battery charger and he started the engines. Both engines started right up and they taxied out to the runway and took off around 3:00pm.

Thomas Day:

I was not at the airport on the date of the accident; however, I received a call from National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) inspector Eric Alleyne on 7/5/2017 at approximately 9:00am stating that an aircraft crashed with fatal injuries after receiving fuel from our airport. He only requested a copy of the fuel receipt and an approximate time of departure for the family. Immediately after my telephone conversation with Mr. Alleyne I contacted our Shell Eastern Aviation Fuel quality control expert Mr. Michael Mattern. He provided me with step by step guidance to discontinue all AVGAS fuel distribution immediately as a cautionary procedure. I then called the Flight Service Station (FSS) to send a notice to all airmen (NOTAM) that we will be temporarily out of service until further notice. I then performed all required testing /sampling and submitted the results to Mr. Mattern. This process took hours but by 7:00pm Mr. Mattern lifted the quarantine on our AVGAS fuel because there were no findings of contaminated fuel. I then immediately notified the FSS that we are now able to distribute AVGAS. Mr. Mattern then shipped (next day) a can to us to collect a sample of the fuel that was pumped into the crashed aircraft. The can is now stored and labeled in a GEA fire cabinet if requested until the NTSB investigation is officially closed.



MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

Eric Alleyne
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

July 2, 2017

Witness: Derek Caldwell and his son

Subject: Accident Statement

According to Mr. Caldwell, he was outside of the store there were visiting and he was watching the sky became very dark. His son said that he heard thunder in the distance and it was windy. He heard an airplane flying above but did not see it as the thunderstorm approached. As they continued to watch the thunderstorm, they heard a loud "boom" followed by pieces of the airplane and personal belongings falling out of the clouds. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Caldwell stated that they watched as the airplane came "tumbling and spinning" out of the sky. They continued to watch the airplane until it was out of view and then called the local authorities

MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

Eric Alleyne
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

NTSB Case Number: ERA17FA222

Subject: Call in from family member to Murry County 911 (Shaybee)

A family member of the pilot called Murry County 911 during the on scene investigation and identified herself as a family member of the pilot. She confirmed the names of the occupants onboard the airplane and gave the birthday of the pilot. She said that they were returning home from a weeklong trip and enroute to Tennessee. The caller was not able to be reach for further information.