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AS-Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 9/30/2023

Subject: ERA23FA382- Witness Statements

Contact: Austin Pitts- Property Owner /Pilot's friend, Timothy Pitts and Jared Hudson

During an onsite interview, Mr. A. Pitts, a friend of the pilot, stated that he spoke with the pilot, Mr. Smith, earlier on the day of the accident. Mr. Smith informed him that he had recently replaced the aircraft's propeller and had removed the engine to install a new propeller governor. He indicated that, following the completion of maintenance, he intended to fly over Mr. Pitts' property and perform a flyby. Mr. Pitts noted that the pilot occasionally conducted such flybys as a friendly gesture, and emphasized that during these visits, the pilot did not perform any unsafe or reckless maneuvers.

At the time of the accident, Mr. Pitts was outdoors with two other individuals, Mr. Timothy Pitts and Mr. Jared Hudson. All three witnesses reported hearing an aircraft approaching from the east. The airplane was observed turning north, then south, and performing a low altitude pass over the property. During the pass, the pilot was seen waving from the cockpit before initiating a climbing left turn. As the aircraft entered the turn, the witnesses observed an unusual oscillation—or "wobble"—in the aft section of the fuselage and heard a droning noise from the propeller with a fluctuating pitch. The aircraft then appeared to stall and subsequently impacted a field in a level attitude. Initially, the witnesses believed the pilot was uninjured; however, upon closer inspection, they recognized the seriousness of the accident.