

Joshua Young
Air Safety Investigator
AS-ERA

Date: 4/10/2024

Subject: ERA24FA160, Witness Interview

Contact: Russell Messenger, Witness

Mr. Messenger was interviewed by first responders on 4/2/2024 at about 1200 eastern daylight time. A copy of the recording was provided to the IIC, and a summary of the interview is below:

- He was at the airport to possibly sell his airplane and was outside near the runway with a prospective buyer when the accident occurred.
- Stated the accident airplane "lawn darted in." When asked to elaborate he stated, "as straight down as you could possibly drive an airplane into the dirt."
- Reported the engine was "running rough."
- Heard the accident aircraft begin its takeoff roll.
- The engine noise sounded like full throttle then sputtered a little then back to full power.
- Engine sputtered and quit with aircraft in flight.
- Nose lowered "like he was going to land, and then he dipped the wing like he was going to turn around and go back the other way to land."

- After the turn began the wing dropped and the aircraft went straight into the dirt.
- Estimated the aircraft maximum altitude was about 100 ft to 150 ft above ground level.
- No skidding, airplane went straight into the dirt.
- Wings were leaking fuel out and there was no fire.
- Called 911 immediately upon seeing the accident.
- After lowering the nose, the aircraft went into a steep turn.

The interview concluded at 1205 eastern daylight time.

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Date: 4/10/2024
Subject: ERA24FA160, Witness Statement
Contact: Wayne Beyer, Witness

Mr. Beyer witnessed the accident of N622PC and provided the following statement to the IIC by electronic mail on April 3, 2024. The following is his statement:

"On Tuesday I saw the accident aircraft taxi towards the end of runway 14. As it taxied y it sounded a bit rough but it is only a small 2 stroke so I didn't think it was unusual. At the times I was looking at a tri pacer that I was interested in. The owner of the tri pacer was there also. We heard the accident plane running at what I would consider full power by the sound of it. We turned to watch it, I would estimate he was at an altitude of approx 100 to 150 ft. All of a sudden the engine went silent. I figured he was doing a "crow hop" which is typical around here for newly completed airplanes. The plane appeared to drop the nose some which I would expect. There was not a lot of forward over the ground speed but there was a pretty stiff wind blowing right down the runway. The airplane appeared to make a turn to the right followed by several wing wags, the fellow with me asked is this guy known for this, answered something to the affect that who knows, just then the plane dropped the inside wing and headed straight down. Impacting the ground in what appeared to be a 90 degree angle to the ground. We started towards the plane with a small fire extinguisher that was in the tri pacer. With the tripacer owner calling 911. When we reached the plane it was very obvious the pilot was deceased, and there was no sign off a fire as the engine was detached from the plane. We retreated and waited for emergency people. Hope this helps."

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Date: 4/10/2024
Subject: ERA24FA160, Witness Interview
Contact: Dallas Fields, Witness

Mr. Fields was interviewed by the Polk County Sheriff's Office on April 2, 2024, and a recording of his interview was provided to the IIC. The following is a summary of that interview:

- He was on Coronet Road; this road runs parallel to the airport runway.
- Aircraft was 150ft to 200 ft above the ground.
- "He barrel rolls, and just plummets nose first into the ground."