

Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Date: March 19, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA143

Contact: Mr. Mark Wright, pilot/owner

Mr. Wright was interviewed via telephone. He stated that he and his three passengers were climbing through 11,200 ft mean sea level (msl) to 13,000 ft msl on an IFR flight plan when he noticed a reduction in power. Since the engine was equipped with a turbo normalizer, he thought the turbo had failed and reverted back to a normally aspirated engine. Mr. Wright then asked air traffic control (ATC) if he could level off at 11,000 ft msl, and ATC approved. Shortly after, the "low oil pressure light" illuminated and pressure began to drop. Mr. Wright told ATC that he was having engine issues and requested to divert to Waycross, Georgia. While being vectored to Waycross, the engine began to run rough with a "loud banging sound." The oil pressure dropped quickly. He did not look at the oil temperature gauge. Mr. Wright said that he knew the engine would seize, as it continued to run rough. The engine did finally seize, and Mr. Wright made a forced landing to a field and impacted a tree.

Mr. Wright said that he and his passengers were able to exit the airplane safely. He looked in the engine's oil door and saw oil all over the interior of the cowling and a huge hole in the top of the engine case.

Mr. Wright said he did conduct a preflight of the airplane, which included checking the oil. It was just about 11 quarts, so he added 1 quart of oil. He said the airplane's last annual inspection was in Jan 2024, and he had flown about 20-30 hours since. No major engine work was completed at the time of the annual. An oil analysis was completed at the annual inspection, but he was not aware of the results. He figured if there was an issue, the maintenance facility would have contacted him. Mr. Wright said the facility is extremely thorough with their inspections. Mr. Wright said

there have been no previous issues with the engine and it ran great. The engine failure caught him completely off guard.

The End