



Record of Conversation

Dan Baker
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: 5/26/2022
Subject: WPR22FA188, N5532R, Show Low, AZ
Person Interviewed: Austin Donald

Mr. Donald is an employee at a fixed base operator at Show Low Regional Airport (SOW) and observed occupant activities and portions of an accident flight involving N5532R at SOW on May 25, 2022. Mr. Donald said the airplane arrived at SOW about 0900 and the occupants seemed to be in town for work. The pilot and passenger asked to use a "crew vehicle." None were available so they obtained a rental car. They returned late afternoon and asked Mr. Donald to refuel the airplane before they departed. Mr. Donald informed them there were other airplanes waiting to be refueled and they would have to wait. The pilot then elected to go to the self-service fuel pump. Mr. Donald had a moment to assist them at the self service pump and refueled the airplane for them. He said he filled both tanks to the bottom of the filler neck.

Mr. Donald was refueling another airplane when he saw N5532R attempt to takeoff on runway 25. He said the airplane became airborne about taxiway A4, reached an altitude of about 20 ft, and touched back down hard about taxiway A2. The airplane taxied back and then took off a second time. The airplane reached about the same altitude and continued the takeoff. He had previously turned the radio down in the refueling truck, so he turned up the volume and heard a radio call of "I think we're going to have to put it."

At no time did he hear the airplane due to being in or near the running fuel truck.



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Person Interviewed: Cody Byrd

Mr. Byrd was a SEAD firefighting pilot stationed at Show Low Regional Airport on May 25, 2022. He said he was on the north ramp conducting shutdown procedures for the day and tying down an airplane. He observed a Cessna 172 (N5532R) attempt to takeoff from runway 25. He said the 172 was “bogging down the runway” and he saw the nose come up and then back down. He said the pilot then “locked up the brakes and the airplane skidded sideways.” The engine “did not sound healthy.” The airplane then taxied back. He thought the airplane sounded normal at that time. The airplane then did a good runup before starting the second takeoff. He said it looked like the pilot “milked it off, set it back down, and then milked it off again and stayed airborne. He said the airplane stayed airborne until it turned downwind and then sank. He said the engine did not sound like it was sputtering, but like it was “running rich, bogged down.”



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Person Interviewed: Mark Empey

Mr. Empey witnessed portions of the accident flight involving a Cessna 172, N5532R, on May 25, 2022 at Show Low, AZ. Mr. Empey was an employee of an airborne firefighting unit stationed at Show Low Regional Airport (SOW). He was shutting the firebase down for the day (about 1745) when he witnessed the airplane taxiing to the runway. He said the engine was “spitting and sputtering” and “didn’t sound healthy.” He did not see the first takeoff attempt. He said the airplane sat in the runup area for a few minutes, but he did not hear the engine then. He saw the airplane takeoff and thought it only climbed to 3-4 ft above the runway. The airplane climbed and settled back to the runway before climbing and then starting a left turn towards the downwind pattern. He said the engine sputtered during the takeoff and he did not see any smoke from the airplane.



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Person Interviewed: Travis Edge

Mr. Edge worked ground support at a SEAT airborne firefighting unit stationed at Show Low Regional Airport on May 25, 2022. He was not a pilot. He said he was on the north ramp conducting shutdown procedures for the day and tying down an airplane when he observed a Cessna 172 (N5532R) attempt to takeoff from runway 25. He said the airplane barely got off the ground before it touched down and “got squirrely” and almost went off the end of the runway. He said the airplane “sounded bad” as it taxied back and as it made a second takeoff. He said the airplane disappeared behind a ridge as it made a left turn and the engine sound faded as it flew away.