RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: May 11, 2020
Person Contacted: Tyler Paulsen, accident pilot
NTSB Accident Number: CEN20LA173

Narrative: In several conversations with Mr. Paulsen, he stated the following:

Phone conversation with Mr. Paulsen on 5/11/20 – He had been making adjustments and working on the airplane lately. An FAA inspector had signed off on the experimental airplane. He took off from Haskell for a test flight. The airplane was flying really well and smooth. He got to 1,800-2,000 ft and went to level off. Airplane naturally likes to climb. It was climbing about 600 fpm, he tried to level off and all of a sudden, the airplane vibrated really aggressively. It felt like tail was thumping, like when a car tire is way out of balance. He pulled the throttle back and tried to descend to see if the vibration and thumping would go away. He tried to slow the airplane down, but it kept thumping and was vibrating the whole airplane. This was not normal and the airplane had never done that before. He pitched down and tried to make a field or a riverbank. All of a sudden the airplane went inverted – it happened very instantly. There was nothing he could do.

He got a student pilot certificate in August or September of 2019. He's been working on a tailwheel endorsement, flying constant speed propeller equipped airplanes, and flying high performance airplanes.

His interactions with David Kester regarding the airplane sale were via text message. David went to North Carolina to buy the airplane for him and somehow it got registered in David's name. The re-registration paperwork was not completed to get the airplane registered to his name, but the sale from Mr. Kester to Mr. Paulsen had been completed.

His friend recovered the airplane with a tractor and trailer, then pulled the airplane into his hangar for storage. His friend found a fractured piece of metal, which was connecting the stabilator on the top of the tail. He will send the photo to the NTSB IIC. He will keep the airplane in his hangar undisturbed.

Text message from Mr. Paulsen to NTSB IIC on 5/16/20 – “I'm looking into seeing if that control piece was supposed to be fully welded. Because it appears to me there [are] 2 tag welds on each end, one weld looked liked it had very little penetration and the other weld had no penetration.”

Phone conversation with Mr. Paulsen on 5/20/20 – He added the winglets to the stabilator to get rid of a constant yaw issue. First, he read on Titan forums and talked to Titan about adding a different cowling that would help with the yaw issue. He ordered that cowling and had it installed on 4/26/20. The yaw issue did not go away completely so he decided to make some winglets for the stabilator. He first made them from wood to test, then made the actual light weight, composite winglets and installed them. After installation he test flew the airplane 3-4 times in the traffic pattern and around the airport – the uncommanded yaw was finally gone. On the day of the accident he flew the airplane at altitude for the first time (up to 2,000 ft). That was the first time flying that flight profile with the winglets. He did not ask Titan about the winglet design and didn’t think he needed to since it was experimental. He did not do anything with the stabilator balance weights after adding the winglets.

Text message from Mr. Paulsen to NTSB IIC on 5/21/20 – “Some of these guys scenarios [are] what I was dealing with and what [led] me to test fly those winglets like we talked about. I was told by fellow flyers [that] it’s a short-coupled airplane and that was [kind of] uncomfortable to fly, yawing and skidding in a turn and those winglets fixed this in full and was an awesome plane to fly until this incident. I wish other flyers could enjoy a fix, of course, without the failure I had. So, if there is any way I can help I sure will if you have some suggestions. I will start working on my report tomorrow. "

End of conversations.