



National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety – Central Region

Interview Summary: Preston Cavner – Accident Pilot – ANC10FA048

Date: September 16, 2010

Location: Double Tree Hotel - San Antonio, Texas

Interviewers: Jennifer Rodi NTSB, Denver, Colorado

Interviewee: Preston Cavner

During the Interview, Mr. Preston Cavner stated the following:

Mr. Cavner recalled that his family flew into Anchorage the evening prior to the accident. The airplane was hangered that evening for avionics work scheduled to take place. The next morning he met with the avionics shop and pulled the airplane out of the hangar approximately 1445.

Mr. Cavner conducted the preflight inspection which included sumping the fuel from the belly pod area, as once the belly pod was loaded he would not have access. He waited to sump the main tanks, as he was going to obtain fuel. His preflight preparations involved obtaining an internet weather briefing which included viewing a weather camera and speaking with employees at his lodge.

Mr. Cavner fueled the airplane at Ace fuel and then sumped the main fuel tanks.

He did not file a flight plan.

When asked about the conditions of his tires being low or flat at the time of departure, he remarked that they were 31 inch Bushwell tires and that they “naturally sit low” and did not look abnormal or appear low to him when he prepared for the flight.

Mr. Cavner stated that he utilized a “wheel” to calculate his weight and balance for the accident flight. He remarked that he kept the wheel in his pocket and that the wheel did not include the belly pod. He calculated the takeoff weight for the accident flight to be 3,300 pounds which he equated to also be the maximum takeoff weight of the airplane. He estimated the weight of his cargo, passengers, and fuel to be 1,400 to 1,450 pounds.

During the interview, he later referred to the last weight and balance calculation he had in his records dated March 24, 2010, and recalled that the gross weight was 3,600 pounds and not 3,300 pounds.

When asked to elaborate about the wheel for calculating the weight and balance, he commented that it came with the airplane and that it was designed for the Cessna 206. He could not remember which vendor provided this wheel.

Mr. Cavner reported that one fuel tank was half full and the other fuel tank was full. More specifically, he commented that there were 20 gallons of fuel in the left fuel tank and the right fuel tank was full for a total of 360 pounds of fuel.

The following weights were provided for the pilot and passengers:

Mr. Cavner – 158 pounds

Mrs. Cavner – 125 pounds

Hudson Cavner – 28 pounds

Myles Cavner – 35 pounds

Prior to the flight they went shopping at Home Depot and Costco. They purchased food items at Costco and lumber and tile at Home Depot.

The lumber was placed as far forward as possible in the airplane, both under the right forward passenger seat and between the two front seats. The lumber between the two front seats extended two inches forward of where the right seat was positioned. The right seat was positioned within one notch of full forward.

Mr. Cavner stated that a purchase receipt reflected he had purchased 72 to 77 pieces of lumber. He left 50 pieces of lumber with Lake Air for transport and estimated that there were 22 to 27 pieces of lumber on board the airplane.

The boxes of tile were placed just behind the front right seat on top of the lumber. Mr. Cavner estimated there were five or six boxes of tile.

The lighter food items were placed in plastic totes and loaded in the rear of the fuselage. In addition one heavy item was loaded in the forward portion of the cargo pod and lighter food items were placed in the back of the cargo pod.

Potted plants were placed on top of the load in the fuselage.

Rachel had one suitcase and one carry on item on board the airplane.

When asked about the cargo, Mr. Cavner could not recall what specifically or how much was placed in the cargo pod. He remarked that all of the cargo weights were estimated and not physically weighed.

The cargo was not secured with nets or tie down straps. Mr. Cavner remarked that everything was stable. He utilized a line of twine or nylon to secure the tote and suitcases. He stated the plants were near the top of the fuselage and there was no room for shifting.

Mr. Cavner received training from the previous owner on how to utilize the wheel for calculating the weight and balance. In addition, he hired a certified flight instructor to fly with him from Renton, Washington, to Alaska. He remarked that during the flight they conducted several hours of ground school on how to conduct weight and balance calculations for the airplane. Mr. Cavner stated that he also had 14 years of experience loading a Cessna 206 for air taxi operations.

Mr. Cavner was seated in the left front seat and his wife and four-year-old son were seated in the right front seat. Rachel and his two-year-old son were seated in the aft seat, directly behind his own. The front two seats had both lap belts and shoulder harnesses, while the aft passenger seat had only a lap belt. Neither of the children were secured with these seatbelts, they were only sitting on top of the laps.

Mr. Cavner stated that he conducted a passenger briefing for Rachel which included the location of the fire extinguisher, the location of emergency equipment, the operation of the rear cargo door, and her seatbelt. When asked he stated that she did not have access to the rear cargo door due to the lumber.

When asked about the positioning of the occupants, he commented that his four-year-old son was placed in the front to help with the center of gravity location and move it forward.

Mr. Cavner recalled fueling the airplane, sumping the tanks, and conducting a run-up as he taxied out for takeoff. He recalled hearing the ATIS and reporting this to the tower. He recalled taking off and everything seeming to be okay. He departed with 30 degrees of flaps which he remarked was standard for the Cessna 206. He stated that at 150 feet above the ground he raised the flaps from 30 degrees to 20 degrees and detected an issue with the airplane. He was worried about getting the airspeed right and not stalling out. He recalled seeing the Sheraton Hotel in front of him and remembered initiating a slight right turn. He did not remember anything after that.

He stated he did not have any problems with the flight controls prior to the accident.

He did remark that his choice for a forced landing would have been 4th street due to the lack of traffic.

Mr. Cavner added that he almost had an accident with the airplane three weeks prior to the accident. He had departed empty and was moving the flaps from 30 degrees to 20 degrees when he almost “lost the airplane” He stated that the flaps did not stop at 20 degrees but continued to zero degrees.

During the second flight when raising the flaps after takeoff, he would raise them from 30 degrees to 20 degrees, then reverse the lever to 40 degrees, and then place it at 20 degrees. This stopped the flap movement at 20 degrees.

His mechanic “Kyle” fixed the flap issue following that flight. He remarked that there were no other issues with the flaps prior to the accident flight.

Mr. Cavner selected attorney Todd Parish to be present during this interview.