Memorandum of Conversation

Date: 17 June 2014

Time: 1330 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Christopher Knauf
Pilot/Owner

Duration of Call: 15 Minutes

Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Mr. Knauf stated that his normal fuel-burn schedule would be to utilize fuel from the left wing tank for takeoff, climb-to-cruise altitude, and landing flight phases. Fuel from the right wing tank was used for cruise flight and cruise-descent flight phases. He stated that during the accident flight he selected the right wing fuel tank just before reaching the final cruise altitude of 10,500 feet mean sea level (msl). He stated that he exhausted all available fuel from the right wing fuel tank when the airplane was established in cruise flight near Hot Springs, Arkansas. He then repositioned the fuel selector to draw fuel from the left fuel tank and continued toward the planned destination.

Mr. Knauf stated that he initiated a cruise-descent when the airplane was about 32 nm from the destination airport. When the airplane was about 10 nm from the destination airport, while descending through 4,000 feet msl, the engine began to run rough and eventually lost total power. With the airport insight, he established best glide airspeed and feathered the propeller in an attempt to extend the airplane's glide. Ultimately, the airplane did not have sufficient altitude to reach the airport and a forced landing was made to a nearby road about 2 miles northeast of the airport. Mr. Knauf stated that he had to maneuver the airplane over a row of trees shortly before landing, which reduced the airspeed below best glide speed, and as a result, the airplane landed hard on the road. The airplane bounced and came to rest on its landing gear in a ditch located alongside the road. The right main wing spar sustained substantial damage during the forced landing. Following the accident, a visual inspection, completed by Mr. Knauf, established that there was no useable fuel in either wing fuel tank. Additionally, both wing tanks appeared to be undamaged and there was no evidence of a fuel leak.

Mr. Knauf stated that his preflight planning indicated that the flight should have taken about 2 hours 15 minutes, using about 21.6 gallons of fuel (6.7 gallons per hour). Before departing, he added 14 gallons of fuel to the right wing fuel tank, which nearly topped-off the 21 gallon fuel tank. The left tank was not refueled before departure. Mr. Knauf stated that he estimated that the airplane fuel load was about 29 gallons before departure; however, he did not visually confirm or measure the actual amount of fuel in the left wing fuel tank. He stated that he texted his mother immediately before departing (1240 cdt) and then called her immediately following the accident (1503 cdt).

Mr. Knauf stated that the airplane was equipped with capacitive fuel sending units in each wing fuel tank; however, since their installation, the fuel sending units had been unreliable in providing accurate fuel levels. Mr. Knauf stated that the total loss of engine power experienced during the accident flight was due to fuel exhaustion and that he should have verified the actual amount of fuel available in all fuel tanks before departure.

I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _ Andrew Todd Fox _

Dated: _ 17 June 2014 _

Andrew Todd Fox
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator