

05 June 2011

Statement of Daniel Benke regarding the crash of N511FS PA24-250

At approximately 1623 hours on 04 June 2011 I received an inflight phone call from Kevin Dooney. Though quite difficult to hear all that was being said I understood that he had experienced a total failure of the electrical system on his aircraft and was unable to lower the gear. He had recently departed S10 (Chelan) on the third leg of a cross country flight that originated from KAST. I had flight-followed with him on the previous two legs via cell phone KAST to KOLM to S10. I asked Kevin on several occasions how much fuel he had onboard. Although he could not give me a firm answer I had the sense that he would be OK on fuel and have enough time to either get the gear down or land the plane.

I could hear the panic/concern in Kevin's voice and attempted to calm him and reassure him that he would be able to safely get his airplane back on the ground @ KAST. I had two more cell phone conversations with him while he attempted to lower the gear @ 1637 and 1644. During both of these conversations I again conveyed the importance of getting back to the airfield (KAST) and landing his plane gear-up. He was so concerned that he would not be successful performing a gear-up landing and said "I would be crashing"

I spoke with him about getting his plane slowed down to allow the gear to deploy~he was very fearful that by doing so he would stall the airplane. He said he was "not comfortable with stalls".

  
Daniel Benke