

**From:** Tim Cottam [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 16, 2013 8:21 PM  
**To:** Latson Tom  
**Subject:** Re: NTSB requests your assistance

Mr. Latson,

Thank you for the inquiry. I have been a pilot since 2006, I met both John Hilyard and Grant Besley before and during my flight instruction with another instructor. I purchased a light sport factory built AMD Zenith Zodiac 601 with 3 other partners. One of them was a flight instructor so it worked out well for us non flyers. I have since put on about 550 hrs. flying mostly locally at KSKX with over 1500 landings mostly on runway 22.

On July 10th I flew with a passenger from about 10:00 AM to 11:00. The wind was calm, air was stable, and the density altitude was beginning to rise to about 9400'. I did three touch and goes in the last twenty minutes of my flight and did not have any problems except for feeling the effect of DA.

On the last landing as I crossed the highway just roughly 150 yards north of runway 22 I got some lift as I crossed the highway. We have always gotten some activity as we cross the highway, but I remember that the lift was a bit bigger than usual. I really did not think that anything was unusual, but it does stick in my head since the accident.

Also, about an hour after the accident I noticed a few dust devils north and northeast of the airport. We have had these dust devils for the past 6 weeks or longer in the afternoon.

There were several other planes up at or just before the accident. I believe you have their contact information. Maybe they have the same take on the weather as myself? I am having a hard time trying to figure it out. John is an experienced pilot and Grant has had more experience than just about anybody. I did not see the accident happen. I had heard that they were doing a simulated engine out landing as they were on downwind about to turn base as part of the biennial flight review.

I had flown with John about two years ago and have been flying in the air at the same time for the past several years. He seemed to be a very qualified pilot. Grant and I have flown together to and from Oshkosh and locally. He also gave me my BFR several months ago. He was extremely qualified. That is all I know. Please let me know if I can answer any questions or be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Tim Cottam  
[REDACTED]

Witness Joachim Chavez FBO manager and one of the first onscene DRAFT

From: Joaquim Chavez [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, July 14, 2013 6:52 AM

To: Latson Tom

Subject: Crash at KSKX on 10 July

Mr. Latson,

Blair Boucher forwarded your questionnaire concerning the crash that occurred at the Taos Airport (KSKX) on 10 July 13. I am the FBO manager and arrived at the crash scene at about the same time as Mr. Boucher. Here is my response;

1. The crash scene was not visible from the FBO where I was sitting,
2. I arrived at the recovery scene before rescue personnel. Mr. Hillyard was just climbing from the wreckage. I had him put into the next vehicle that arrived and taken to the FBO because I was concerned he was in shock. N424CT was located about 400 feet short of the landing threshold for Rwy 22 and about 30 feet to the northwest of centerline. The aircraft was facing opposite runway heading. The aircraft nose was broken off from the firewall forward including the instrument panel. Mr. Besley (deceased pilot) was lying faced down, facing the rear of the aircraft with his head pushed against the aft ceiling. His neck was at a severe angle and contorted. He had no pulse and was not breathing. The cockpit area was mostly intact but both seat pans were torn from their mounting surfaces allowing the seats to move freely and possibly allowing Mr. Besley to be thrown around upon impact.. The strobe and wingtip lights were still on
3. I have no photos.
4. AWOS indicated the winds were calm and the temperature was 80 degrees F. When I arrived at the crash site I noted the winds were 5-8 knots out of about 210 degrees. The day was clear. Cumulus clouds were just beginning to form. There had been a lot of dust devils in the area recently. This is normal

during mid to late summer. The dust devils look like a small tornado that can extend as high as about 500 feet. Most of the time they are visible from the air because of the dust and debris they carry. Occasionally if they initiate on the runway or taxiway they will have no dust and debris and can not be seen from the air. In this case I see them from the FBO by the grass along the edge of the runway/taxiway moving. The dust devils are a major concern here in late summer for small aircraft.

5. The airport manager, another airport employee, and myself performed the recovery of the aircraft wreckage. The aircraft had a ballistic recovery parachute installed in it. The system was made by BSR and was not deployed. The parachute system was intact but the actuating handle and mounting assembly had been damaged due to the severe impact to the aircraft fuselage. BSR (parachute manufacturer) was very little help in disabling the system. They directed me to a PDF file on their website for instructions to disable the system. The instructions talked about the dangers of handling the system and referenced procedures to disable the system in an undamaged aircraft. In the case of this aircraft I was concerned that the trigger cable may have been partially activated due to the severe damage to the aircraft fuselage on impact. The disarming instructions did not address this nor did the BSR technical representative provide any useful help. The local police and fire department could offer no help as well as the New Mexico State Police Bomb Disposal Unit. With a lot of effort the system was removed. BSR was negligent in their lack of assistance. As a note, it was not until after I had informed BSR that the system had been removed that they informed me that the explosive charge in the BSR unit was only a model rocket motor.

Joaquim Chavez

[REDACTED]

**From:** Latson Tom

**Sent:** Thursday, July 25, 2013 11:30 AM

**To:** Latson Tom

**Subject:** Witness Tim True - Airplane crash at Taos NM

Tim True [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Driving on dirt road saw airplane approaching at weird angle

He saw the nose of the airplane go down a bit,

Then he lost sight of the airplane when his truck went down in a ditch, Then a few seconds later he came up over the other side of the ditch and saw a cloud of dust

He told his two sons (ages 12 & 15) 'that airplane just crashed'

He called 9-1-1 Emergency

He jumped the fence and was the first person to arrive at the crash, his two sons followed him to the scene

The pilot was up and walking around, but was "dazed"

He went to the other person, still strapped in his seat in the airplane

His head was down and his neck was bent

He checked for pulse and breathing – (none)

His two sons were close by and saw everything

He later departed to the west in his truck on the main highway

After the accident he saw huge gusts of wind in the area and his truck was blown around by the wind when he was driving on the main highway

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**From:** F de Souza  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 13, 2013 2:08 PM  
**To:** Latson Tom  
**Subject:** Re: NTSB requests your assistance

At approximately noon on the day of the accident I was in the vicinity of Taos airport in a Cessna Centurion, returning from Alamosa, providing instruction to the owner / pilot who was working on a WINGS program (Flight Review).

We overflew Taos airport at pattern altitude and were informed that the airport was closed due to the accident. We then diverted to Santa Fe.

Conditions all morning between Taos and Alamosa were unremarkable; our departure from Taos at approximately 10:15 AM and landing at Alamosa about 11 AM were done in calm winds.

There was no turbulence during the flight, and upon return to the vicinity of Taos airport around noon surface winds were reported to be calm. We experienced no turbulence at our operating altitudes of 8500' - 10,500' MSL.

I hope this information is of some use to you.

Sincerely,

Ferdinand de Souza, CFI

From: Blair B [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2013 8:46 AM  
To: Latson Tom  
Subject: RE: Weather Conditions N424CT Flight Design accident KSKX

Dear Mr. Latson,

Following is my recollection of the weather conditions around the time of the crash of N424CT at KSKX. I was returning from KALS in a Bonanza A36 and arrived at KSKX at approximately 10:15-10:25. We had completed a practice approach on the RNAV GPS Rwy 3 approach from Teloy. The winds on the AWOS were calm to 260@3. The flight was very smooth and we experience no unusual turbulence or anomalies on our approach to Rwy 22.

Upon landing and taxiing to our hangar, we observed N424CT take off on Rwy 22. About 30 minutes later we were at the local FBO and were advised that an aircraft had crashed at the approach end of Rwy 22. We drove to the crash site within about 5 minutes. Again, there was little to no wind however the temperature was relatively hot.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Blair Bouchier  
[REDACTED]  
Taos, NM 87571  
[REDACTED]

7-17-13

I PUNCHED OUT OF WORK AT 11:06 AM  
NUMBER ONE THE MAP MARKS MY LOCATION.

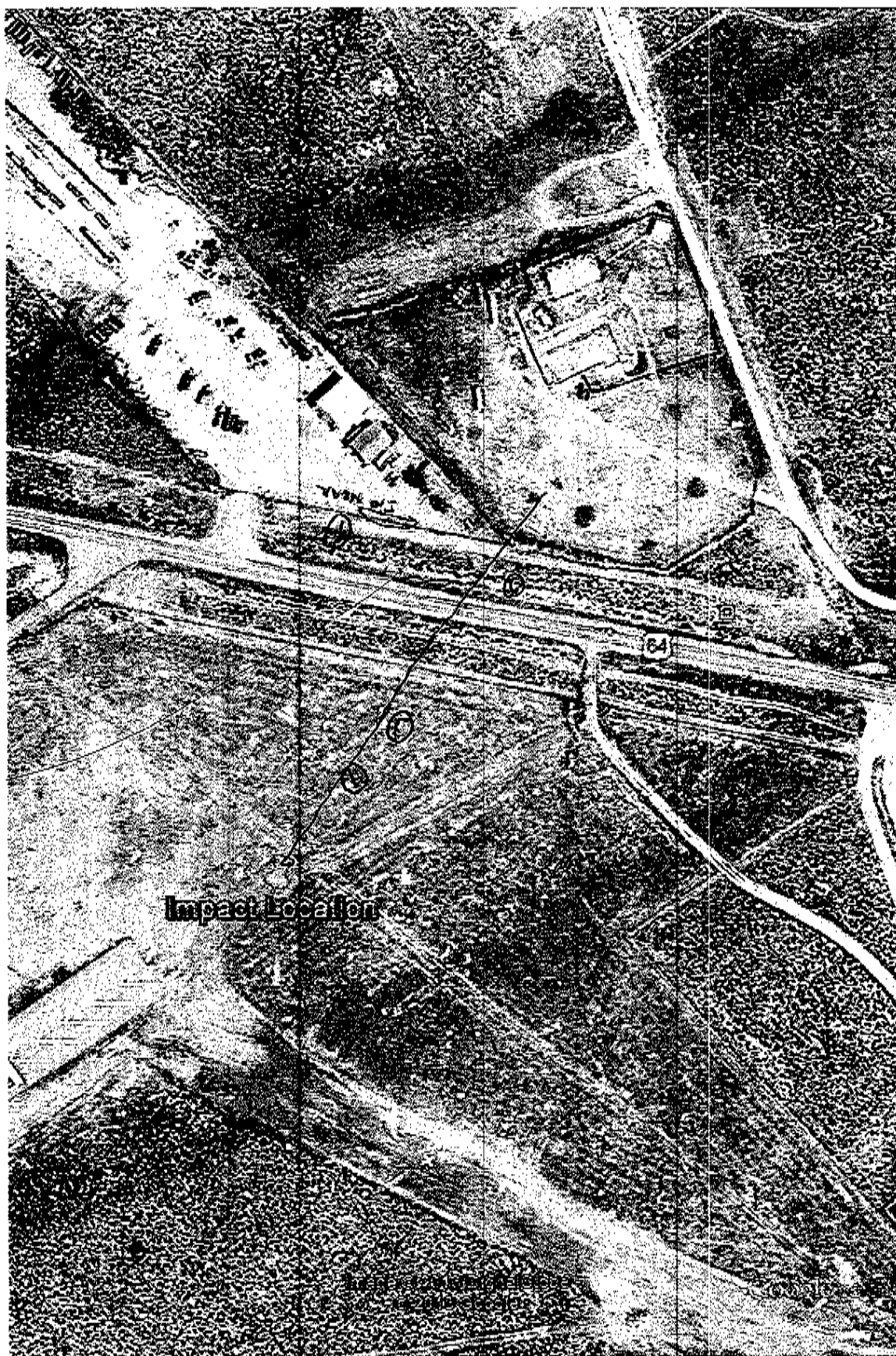
2. I BELIEVE THE AIRPLANE WAS  
APPROX. 80 FEET OFF THE GROUND  
GOING OVER THE FENCES.

3. NUMBER THREE MARKS ABOUT WHERE  
THE PLANE WAS IN TROUBLE.

4. THE PLANE SEEMED TO HAVE  
TROUBLE STAYING IN A FLIGHT  
PATTERN.

5. 1 TO 2 SECONDS FOR CRASH TO  
HAPPEN IT WAS SHOCKING, I DON'T  
THINK I BELIEVED THE PLANE  
WENT DOWN.

6. THE ENTIRE TIME THE PLANE WAS IN  
FLIGHT, SOUNDED LIKE ENGINE WAS CUTTING  
OUT, BOUNCING AROUND A LOT. SEEMED  
LIKE PLANE DROPPED ABOUT 10 FEET  
THEN NOSE UP AND THEN PITCH TO THE  
RIGHT, AND THEN NOSE TO THE GROUND  
AND FLIPPED OVER, STRUCK GROUND NOSE  
DOWN.



Google earth







## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Thomas J. Latson, Jr.**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**Central Region**

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**NTSB Accident Number: CEN13LA409 – N424CT Flight Design CTSW at Taos, NM**

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On July 12, 2013 I spoke on the telephone with, and received several e-mail messages from Captain Adam Doyle, Aviation Base Manager of Tristate Careflight at Taos, New Mexico.

Following is a summary of those contacts from Captain Doyle:

*“I was the duty pilot for Tristate Careflight’s Taos helicopter base on 7/10/13. My shift was from 0600 to 1800. I flew the helicopter departing from the Taos Regional Airport (KSKX) to the northwest on a MEDEVAC flight at 1051 MDT.*

*I did not see or hear any other aircraft in the area. At that time the wind was light from the east, estimated at about 5-7 knots. During my flight in the KSKX area I did not notice either turbulence or wind shear.*

*I became aware of the accident at about 1130 as my return route of flight took me directly over KSKX. Several emergency vehicles and first responders were already present on scene. I had radio contact with Taos Aviation personnel at or shortly prior to 1130 to inquire whether a helicopter was required.*

*My estimate as to the time of the accident would be shortly after 1100.... “*