Record of Conversation with Matt Tepper
Interviewed by Jason Trask

Started shift at 0500. The plan was to be at the first LZ at 0600, but did not arrive until 0630. The plan was to do five runs up to an elevation of 10,000 feet for the PR event. The aircraft used was the spare, aircraft N687AM, since all of the medical equipment was already removed from it. The regular aircraft is a modernized B407 and the spare is a legacy.

The fuel was sumped and labeled as the day fuel sample. Mr. Tepper grabbed the OGE hover charts out of the primary aircraft to use for the PR flight.

Mr. Tepper performed a normal pre-flight of the aircraft. Nothing out of the ordinary was found.

Flight #1

Flight #1 departed the base for the saddle with a landing elevation of 4300 feet. Fuel at the start was 680 pounds. The aircraft was shut down and briefed the volunteer firefighters and the plan for the day. Michael Lentz and a firefighter named Claire (could not recall last name) and one case of water.

The aircraft was started and flown to the top of Mt. Baldy. Orbited several times to determine the wind direction, which was determined to be from the east. Temperature was 13 degrees C. He made a crosswind approach and made a slope landing. He kept the aircraft at 100% RPM and then departed back down to the lower LZ.

Flight #2

Flight #2 would be one rider and 150 pounds of water. The passenger was named Evan. The second landing was made with no issue. The water and passenger were disembarked and he took off for the lower LZ again.

He set up for a final approach into the lower LZ. Turned final at 40 KTS to make the approach. At that point the low RPM horn sounded. He abandoned the landing and turned downslope/downcanyon to gain more time and more altitude beneath him. There were no other warning lights and the engine never quit.

A mayday call was made to the volunteer firefighters, and they responded they would start to look for him.

He was descending at about 600 feet per minute and 40 KTS. Any attempt to pull power resulted in the low RPM horn. Nudging the cyclic forward increased rate of descent. An autorotation was never entered, and the decision was made to use the power available to try and land.

He tried to land on the road and the trees came up fast. He flared very hard and pulled the collective to the stop to cushion the landing. The aircraft came down on its right side. He shutdown the aircraft with the throttle. He made a radio call to the firefighters telling them he was down on the ground. The

battery was turned off. He removed his helmet and glasses and climbed out of the left door of the helicopter.

I asked Mr. Tepper if he looked to see where the throttle position was. He said he does not recall looking at the position of the throttle. I also asked Mr. Tepper if he thought to put the FADEC into manual mode. He said he did not, and did not want the distraction while looking for a place to land.