



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Samantha Link
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: April 15, 2021
Person Contacted: Mr. Pete Hardy (Pilot/Owner)
NTSB Accident Number: CEN21LA176

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation with Mr. Hardy he reported the following:

Mr. Hardy reported that the accident flight was the first flight after test flights. Since purchasing the airplane in October 2020, he has been experiencing a lot of maintenance related problems. Mostly with the propeller. During engine runs, the airplane would redline at 2450 RPM, but during takeoff it would increase to 2600-2700 RPM. The last few test flights he was able to get the engine RPM to 2450 RPM for takeoff.

On the day of accident, the pilot was departing about 0730. He conducted a thorough preflight, and he checked the RPM during the runup. He started the takeoff roll on the short, grassy runway. When he rotated at 75 knots the airplane didn't feel like it lifted off as fast as normal. He checked the RPM indicator and saw 2300 RPMs and decreasing. He was unsure why the RPMS were low despite being in ground effect. Given the short runway and treelined runway, he could not set the airplane back onto the runway. He raised the landing gear, and as the airplane's speed increased to 85 knots he pitched up to climb over the powerlines at the end of the runway. The airplane started to "run out of steam," he leveled the airplane and observed 1900 RPM and decreasing. At this time, the airplane was descending into the powerlines. He attempted to go below the powerlines and veered slightly right to avoid poles. He was able to keep the airspeed at 85 knots. He conducted a couple shallow turns to land onto a nearby open field. When the airplane was about 15 feet above the ground the right wing struck a tree. The airplane swung to the right, impacted the ground, and slid to a stop on its belly.

Mr. Hardy spoke with the most recent mechanic (under the previous owner). The mechanic said he replaced the bearings and reinstalled the spinner cone. He did not conduct an engine run up post maintenance. The previous owner also didn't fly the airplane following the annual inspection.