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Senior Air Safety Investigator
AS-CEN

Date: March 15, 2023

Subject: CEN23LA128

Contact: Larry Moore - Previous owner of N969WD

Spoke with Mr. Moore regarding N969WD and the accident that occurred on March 10, 2023. He said he had just sold the airplane to the buyers and witnessed the accident. He relayed that he did not believe that the accident was the result of a loss of engine power. He said that the winds at the time of the accident were about 35 to 40 knots with gusts. He said he attempted to persuade the pilot to delay taking the airplane until another day when winds were more favorable, but the pilot and his passenger were determined to leave that day. He said that they performed a run up to 4000 rpm, checked the ignitions, and all temperatures and pressures were normal. The pilot and passenger then took off and when the airplane got to about 400 ft above the ground, he saw it and said it looked like the airplane was getting bounced around by turbulence and was going side to side. The airplane then stalled and went into the ground. He was about 1/4 mile away and could not hear engine sounds due to the wind but noted that the 3-blade wood propeller was splintered on impact with the ground which he thought indicated it must have been under power, but he did not want to second guess the pilots and what they said. He said that the airplane was still at the location of the accident about 50 yards to the side of the runway and resting upside down as it had just after the accident. He said that it was not impeding the runway. When asked if there was a hangar that could be used to place the airplane, he said there were only 2 hangars on the airport, and both were in use. He had the airplane in one of those hangars previously, but the hangar owner had since placed his own airplane in the hangar. He provided me with the name of a company that could turn the airplane over when needed and he said that in his opinion, the airplane could stay where it was until an exam could be scheduled.