



## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

**Stephen Stein**  
**Aviation Accident Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Office of Aviation Safety – Western Pacific Region**

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**NTSB Accident Number: WPR20FA063**  
**Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N736YU; Cessna TR182**  
**Accident Location: Billings, Montana**  
**Accident Date: January 11, 2020**

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Note: The following interview was documented by the Investigator –In-Charge (IIC), Stephen Stein.

### Interview #1 Summary

**Connie Oser**  
Wife of Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 14, 2020; 1611 Pacific standard time

Ms. Oser stated that on the day of the accident, the pilot told her he was going to fly at 1630 and return about 1930 as they had plans at 2000. She did not know where he intended to go on the day of the accident. She contact law enforcement at 2000 when he did not return home.

### Interview #2 Summary

**Connie Oser**  
Wife of Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; February 3, 2020; 1430 Pacific standard time

Ms. Oser stated that she did not observe any cognitive, sleep or stress/anxiety related issues affecting the pilot in the three days that preceded the accident, nor was he sick.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Jason Bruce**  
Previously Flew with Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 27, 2020; 0940 Pacific standard time

Mr. Bruce stated that he last flew with the accident pilot about one month prior to the accident. The accident pilot had only recently started taking residents in the Sober Beginnings homes in his airplanes about one month prior when they flew. When they all arrived at the airport hangar the pilot showed them the airplane, performed a preflight inspection and then they departed Billings for Hardin, Montana (east of Billings) where they overflew a Battlefield, landed to refuel and switch seats. They subsequently departed for Big Horn, Montana (southeast of Billings) before returning to Billings. While Mr. Bruce was seated in the left seat (pilot's seat) he observed that the flight was mostly flown via autopilot at approximately 4,000 ft mean sea level or 5,000 ft mean sea level. The accident pilot explained the function of the autopilot and that they could use it to set their desired altitude and the airplane would stay within a certain range. He did not say what the range was.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Kacy Keith**  
Friend and Business Partner of Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 16, 2020; 1300 Pacific standard time

According to Ms. Keith, the accident pilot owned several homes that were used as sober residences for people in recovery program from drugs and/or alcohol. The pilot took program participants in his airplane for pleasure and to see if they were interested in it as a profession. A video that had been sent by one of the accident passengers about 1704 mountain standard time on the night of the accident showed the accident pilot in the front right seat.

Ms. Keith stated that she had flown with the accident pilot on a few occasions. They flew different routes each time, but usually they would fly about 1,000 ft over terrain. While flying from Billings, Montana to Roundup, Montana they maintained 5,000 ft mean sea level and used the same altitude when they flew to Bridger. She recalled that the pilot would use the airplane's "altitude hold" function when they flew. Ms. Keith did not fly with him at night. The pilot did not use a paper map during any of the flights, but had a map on the cockpit display at all times, which showed some terrain features and possibly topography.





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### Interview #1 Summary

**Kalub Tomlinson**  
Previously Flew with Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 27, 2020; 0903 Pacific standard time

Mr. Tomlinson stated that he was a passenger in the accident airplane about 2 weeks before the accident. The accident pilot allowed him to sit in the left seat and follow him along on the controls. Additionally, the accident pilot asked to critique his teaching style. Mr. Tomlinson recalled the accident pilot talking about the autopilot feature, but doesn't remember if it was active during the flight.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Kevin Stuth**  
Flight Test Engineer, Garmin

Electronic Mail Correspondence; December 17, 2020

The NTSB IIC submitted the following question to Garmin on November 18, 2020,

- 1) *“Where does the Garmin GTN 750 get its obstacle data from?”*
- 2) *“The obstacle range (below) includes information on “Unlighted Obstacle (Height is less than 1000 ft agl). Would an obstacle below the 200 ft agl (the FAA’s min height for sectionals) been visible on this page?”*

According to Mr. Stuth,

1. *“The GTN obstacle database is sourced from the FAA’s Digital Obstacle file ([https://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/flight\\_info/aeronav/digital\\_products/dof/](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/digital_products/dof/)) for point obstacles within the United States.*
2. *An obstacle with a maximum height less than 200 feet AGL will not be displayed on the GTN in fixed wing aircraft. Garmin obstacle databases come in two variants; one for fixed wing aircraft*

*and one for helicopters. The obstacle database for fixed wing aircraft only includes obstacles contained in the FAA's Digital Obstacle file that are 200 ft AGL and taller. The helicopter obstacle database includes all obstacles contained in the FAA database that are 25 ft AGL and taller."*



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Steve Vold**  
President/General Manager, Aerotronics, Inc.

Electronic Mail Correspondence; February 3, 2020

Aerotronics, Inc. is a full service avionics facility that specializes in avionics sales, installation, and service. They performed the installation of the avionics in the accident airplane.

According to Mr. Vold, the Aspen provides air data information for the autopilot and also air data to the Garmin GTN 750. There is no autopilot altitude preselect in the installation that was performed.

### Interview #2 Summary

**Steve Vold**  
President/General Manager, Aerotronics, Inc.

Electronic Mail Correspondence; October 23, 2020



According to Mr. Vold,

*“The Aspen have their own internal altitude sensor or airdata computer with a digital altitude tape display with baro correction adjustment available to the pilot on the face of the Aspen. The right side display on the Aspen occupies the majority of the right side of the display. There is not an external device driving the Aspen altitude device. The GTN can receive the altitude data from the Aspen and the GTN also can present GPS based altitude information on selected data fields. Here is a copy of the front of the Aspen for reference of the altitude tape and baro setting field. Near the bottom is the key that the pilot touches to set the baro field.”*



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Victor Smith**  
Previously Flew with Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 27, 2020; 1226 Pacific standard time

Mr. Smith stated that he flew with the accident pilot a couple of times. During one evening flight he sat in the back of the airplane from Billings, Montana to Roundup, Montana and back as they maintained between 4,900 ft and 5,400 ft mean sea level, the altitude range that the accident pilot told the left seat occupant to maintain who was allowed to handfly the airplane. He believed the autopilot was OFF during these flights or during a segment of these flights according to what the accident pilot said during the flights.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**Wayne Dykstra**  
Co-Owner of the Accident Airplane and Friend of Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 14, 2020; 1200 Mountain standard time

Mr. Dykstra stated that he co-owned the accident airplane with the accident pilot who had been a close friend of his for 47 years. According to Mr. Dykstra, the accident pilot started flying in 1972 and did much of his flying and instructing in Billings and the surrounding area, which he was familiar with.



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### Interview #1 Summary

**William Crow**  
Previously Flew with Accident Pilot

Interview Date & Time; January 27, 2020; 1015 Pacific standard time

Mr. Crow stated that he flew with the accident pilot about a week before the accident. The pilot picked him and the other passengers up and took them to the airport hangar where they pulled the airplane out and performed a preflight inspection of the airplane. During this time he explained what he was inspecting. They departed Billings and flew to Hardin, Montana where they refueled. After they departed Hardin they flew to the Yellowtail Dam (southeast of Billings) and then returned to Billings. They flew about 4,000 to 5,000 ft mean sea level for most of the accident flight and used autopilot for each leg. While in the air the accident pilot would give the left seat occupant some time to manipulate the flight controls.