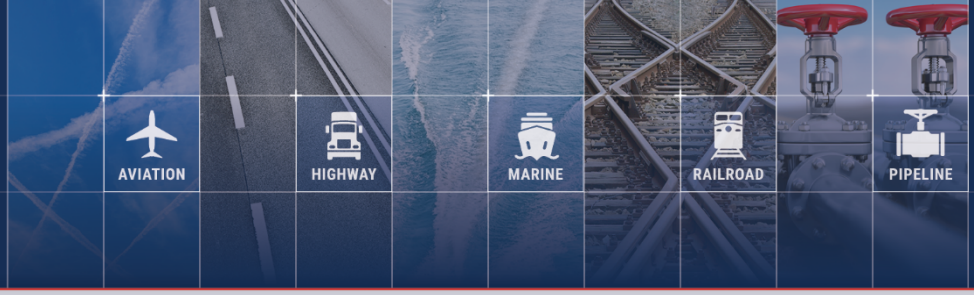

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Juntura, Oregon	**Accident Number:**	WPR15FA161
Date & Time:	May 14, 2015, 10:32 Local	**Registration:**	N5042P
Aircraft:	Bellanca 7GCBC	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Low altitude operation/event	**Injuries:**	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The private pilot was flying his airplane in visual meteorological conditions in support of a cattle drive. A witness observed the airplane complete three to four passes before impacting power lines at an altitude about 100 ft above ground level. The witness reported that the engine sounded normal leading up to the impact, and a postaccident examination of the airframe and engine revealed no anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to see and avoid power lines while intentionally maneuvering at low altitude for the aerial observation flight.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Wire - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering	Low altitude operation/event (Defining event)
Maneuvering	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On May 14, 2015, at 1032 mountain daylight time, a Bellanca 7GCBC, N5042P, impacted wires while maneuvering near Juntura, Oregon. The private pilot was fatally injured, and the airplane sustained substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the aerial observation flight to drive cattle, which was operated under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91. No flight plan had been filed for the flight that departed a private airport in Juntura.

A witness reported that after getting up that morning, she had gone to make sure the property gate was closed, as she knew there was a cattle drive that morning. Upon returning to the house, she was cleaning the kitchen, when she heard the accident airplane flying overhead. She estimated that the airplane flew over three to four times. On the last pass, the accident pass, she had moved to the sliding glass door in the kitchen, and watched as the airplane flew straight and level into the wires. The airplane nosed over, impacted the ground, and came to rest inverted about 200 yards from her house. She described the engine sound before the accident as "normal."

According to responding law enforcement personnel, downed power lines were entwined in the wreckage. The responding sergeant reported a strong fuel smell inside the cockpit. He also reported that the pilot had initially survived the accident.

Both witnesses and local law enforcement stated that the pilot was a local area farmer/resident, that would routinely use his airplane for cattle drives, and was familiar with the area.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	51,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	January 21, 2013
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	120 hours (Total, all aircraft), 30 hours (Total, this make and model)		

The 51-year old pilot held a private pilot certificate with a rating for airplane single-engine land. His most recent FAA third-class medical certificate was issued on January 21, 2013, with the

limitation that the holder shall possess glasses for near/intermediate vision. The pilot reported 120 total hours of flight experience on his medical certificate application, with 30 hours in the previous 6 months. The pilot's medical certificate expired for all classes in January 2015.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	**Registration:**	N5042P
Model/Series:	7GCBC NO SERIES	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1979	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	1121-79
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	**Seats:**	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Textron Lycoming
ELT:	C91A installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	150 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

The high-wing, single-engine airplane was manufactured in 1979. It was powered by a Textron Lycoming (Avco Lycoming) O-320-A2B, 150-horsepower reciprocating engine. The airplane's records were not located; therefore, the airplane's maintenance history could not be determined.

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BNO,4159 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	39 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	257°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8000 ft AGL	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	290°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.81 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	12°C / 2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Juntura, OR (OR14)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Juntura, OR	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	

The 0953 automated weather observation at Burns Municipal Airport (BNO) Weather for BNO about 39 miles southwest of the accident site, reported wind from 257 degrees at 7 knots, visibility 10 statute miles, a broken cloud ceiling at 9,000 ft, temperature 12°C, dew point 02 °C, altimeter setting of 29.82 inches of mercury.

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	43.759723,-118.088333(est)

The accident site was located in Juntura Valley; in a relatively flat area covered with scrub brush and rocks. The first identified point of contact was a set of power lines located about 700 ft southwest of the main wreckage. The airplane stuck the top three power lines; the power poles were about 100 ft tall. The first identified ground impact was about 10 ft from the main wreckage.

The entire airplane came to rest inverted at the accident site. Portions of the two lower power lines were wrapped around the airplane. Both wings and empennage remained attached to the fuselage. The left wing had impacted a small tree that ruptured the fuel tank. The right wing fuel tank had not been compromised, and contained about 3 ½ gallons of fuel.

Flight control continuity was established from the tail section to the cockpit and from both wings to the cockpit.

The engine remained attached to the engine mounts and firewall. The propeller assembly separated from the propeller flange. The fuel line from the gascolator to the carburetor had separated at the gascolator fitting; however, when the carburetor was elevated, fuel flowed out of the separated line. The carburetor sustained impact damage; the butterfly valve remained attached to the throttle cable, but had separated from the top portion of the carburetor. The top four spark plugs were removed, and, according to the Champion Aviation Check-A-Plug chart AV-27, the spark plug signatures were consistent with normal operation. Manual rotation of the crankshaft flange produced thumb compression at each of the cylinders in firing order, which established mechanical and valve train continuity. Due to damaged P-lead wires, the magnetos were removed and manually rotated via their respective drive shafts; both magnetos produced spark at each post. A detailed report is in the docket for this accident.

Medical and Pathological Information

The autopsy was performed by the Office of the State of Oregon Medical Examiner. The cause of death was listed as multiple blunt force injuries. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Bioaeronautical Sciences Research Laboratory, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, performed toxicology testing on specimens from the pilot. The results were negative for carbon monoxide, cyanide, volatiles, and tested drugs.

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	Craig Karel; Federal Aviation Administration; Boise, ID
Original Publish Date:	April 25, 2017
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=91173