

Brief of Accident

Adopted 12/19/2011

ERA11CA352
File No. 29095 06/18/2011 Ridgeville ,SC Aircraft Reg No. N177SC Time (Local): 23:45 EDT

Make/Model: Piper/PA18-160
Engine Make/Model: Lycoming / O-320 SERIES
Aircraft Damage: Substantial
Number of Engines: 1
Operating Certificate(s): None
Type of Flight Operation: Banner Tow
Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	0	0	1
Pass	0	0	1

Last Depart. Point: Lawrenceville, GA
Destination: St. George, GA
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip

Condition of Light: Night
Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility
Basic Weather: Visual Conditions
Lowest Ceiling: None
Visibility: 10.00 SM
Wind Dir/Speed: Calm
Temperature (°C): 21
Precip/Obscuration: Light - Rain; No Obscuration

Pilot-in-Command Age: 31

Flight Time (Hours)

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)
Commercial; Single-engine Land

Total All Aircraft: 1500
Last 90 Days: Unk/Nr
Total Make/Model: 1300
Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr

Instrument Ratings
Airplane

*** Note: NTSB investigators used data provided by various entities, including, but not limited to, the Federal Aviation Administration and/or the operator and did not travel in support of this investigation to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***

The pilot stated that he filled the airplane's fuel tanks to capacity, a total of 36 gallons, prior to departing on the flight to the banner-tow site, which was approximately 2 hours away. After picking up the banner, he flew the banner for about 35 minutes before dropping it back at the airport. He then departed to an airport approximately 27 miles away in order to refuel the airplane. After landing at the airport, the pilot found the fuel pump locked and departed to a second airport approximately 20 miles away. The pilot stated that the weather began to deteriorate and he decided to turn around. The pilot then elected to divert to a third airport. Approximately 7 miles from the airport, the airplane's engine lost all power. The pilot conducted a forced landing to a railroad track and, during the landing rollout, the airplane's right wing impacted a pole. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage and right wing. After a Federal Aviation Administration inspector supplied fuel to the engine during a postaccident examination, the engine started and ran with no anomalies. The pilot stated that he ran out of fuel.

Updated at Dec 19 2011 9:20AM

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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OCCURRENCES

Enroute - Fuel exhaustion
Enroute - Off-field or emergency landing

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Task performance-Planning/preparation-Fuel planning-Pilot - C
Aircraft-Fluids/misc hardware-Fluids-Fuel-Fluid level - C

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows:
A total loss of engine power due to fuel exhaustion as a result of the pilot's inadequate fuel planning.