National Transportation Safety Board Washington, DC 20594

Printed on: 03/23/2015 08:16:05 AM

Brief of Accident

Adopted 07/18/2013

ERA12FA130

File No. 31325 12/31/2011 Jacksonville ,FL Aircraft Reg No. N7408Z Time (Local): 11:11 EST Make/Model: Piper/PA-25-235 Fatal Serious Minor/None Engine Make/Model: Lycoming / O-540-B2C5 Crew 1 0 0 Aircraft Damage: Substantial Pass 0 0 0 Number of Engines: 1 Operating Certificate(s): None Type of Flight Operation: Banner Tow Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation Last Depart, Point: Same as Accident/Incident Location Condition of Light: Day Destination: Local Flight, FL Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip Basic Weather: Visual Conditions Lowest Ceiling: None Visibility: 10.00 SM Wind Dir/Speed: 240 / 011 kts Temperature (°C): 22 Precip/Obscuration: No Obscuration; No Precipitation Pilot-in-Command Age: 32 Flight Time (Hours) Certificate(s)/Rating(s) Total All Aircraft: 2178 Commercial; Private; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land Last 90 Days: 177 Total Make/Model: 874 Total Instrument Time: 57 Instrument Ratings Airplane

*** Note: NTSB investigators either traveled in support of this investigation or conducted a significant amount of investigative work without any travel, and used data obtained from various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***

The flight was climbing out after picking up a banner. A security camera video showed the airplane climbing with the banner trailing behind before it disappeared from the camera's view. Shortly after, witnesses observed the banner free falling to the ground and the airplane in a right spin before it impacted a parking lot in a nose-down attitude. Postaccident examination revealed no malfunctions or abnormalities that would have precluded normal operation of the airplane. The levels of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, also known as marijuana) and the Tetrahydrocannabinol Carboxylic Acid (THC metabolite) detected in the pilot's blood during toxicological testing indicated that he had recently used THC. Although the investigation could not determine precisely when the pilot had last used THC, the levels detected indicated that the pilot was impaired and most likely posed a hazard to flight safety. Autopsy results also identified preexisting moderate-to-severe cardiomyopathy; however, there is no indication that this heart condition contributed to the accident.

Updated at Jul 18 2013 11:15AM

ERA12FA130 File No. 31325

12/31/2011 Jacksonville ,FL

Aircraft Reg No. N7408Z

Time (Local): 11:11 EST

OCCURRENCES

Initial climb - Abrupt maneuver
Initial climb - Aerodynamic stall/spin
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C
Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-(general)-Not attained/maintained - C
Personnel issues-Physical-Impairment/incapacitation-Illicit drug-Pilot - F
Personnel issues-Physical-Health/Fitness-(general)-Pilot

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

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows:
The pilot's in-flight loss of control during climb after a banner pickup. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's impairment due to marijuana.