

Downed plane registered to man from Bay Area



The plane split apart after hitting trees before landing next to a house on Tionontati Street in El Dorado County on Oct. 10. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

The pilot of the plane that crashed Saturday in Lake Tahoe is believed to be the owner of the aircraft, according to a Lake Tahoe Airport official. The FAA registry lists the plane as being owned by Conrad Yu from Oakley.

People who saw the occupants get into the plane just after 5:30pm Oct. 10 said only a man and woman were on board. The Beech 35 Bonanza crashed into a neighborhood moments after takeoff . Debris was scattered about the back yard of the house that was partially damaged after the plane erupted in flames.

The bodies were recovered Sunday from the crash site on Tionontati Street, which is on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe. The names of the victims have not been released.

The FAA and National Transportation Safety Board both were on scene Sunday, with the NTSB taking the lead. NTSB investigators expect to be in town for several days.

"We are gathering the facts. We will be looking at where the aircraft came to rest, we will look at the engines and then they will be moved to a secure location," Terry Williams with the NTSB told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We do a thorough investigation into the cause and factors that may have led to it." The NTSB often takes more than a year to release reports on plane crashes.

An issue at this elevation is density altitude. On warm days the lift, thrust, and engine performance of a plane can be compromised. Wind may also have been a factor on Saturday.

"There is someone at the airport who witnessed the whole event. They heard problems," Lake Tahoe Airport Manager Sherry Miller told *Lake Tahoe News*. She said the person watched the plane take off and go into the trees. "It could be that it didn't sound right or it could sound like not enough power. I'm not sure which one it was."

She said the pilot did not purchase fuel at the airport.

An El Dorado County sheriff's sergeant on Saturday told *LTN* the pilot landed at the airport, stayed around a bit and then took off on the fatal flight.

The South Lake Tahoe airport does not have a staffed tower. According to Miller, it would not have made a difference if it were operational.

"Air traffic controllers don't make decisions for pilots," Miller said. "They do not give instructions to pilots in how to operate their aircraft."

She added that this includes not telling a pilot which way to bank to avoid a neighborhood.