

Fuel mixture likely cause of South Tahoe fatal plane crash

While the definitive reason a plane crashed in August while taking off from Lake Tahoe Airport has not been determined, preliminary data points to the mixture of fuel as the reason.

Five people from Fresno died Aug. 25 when the Piper Cherokee nose-dived into a field as it was taking off toward the lake. Witnesses had said they heard the plane sputtering before it crashed.

“While taxiing to the ramp, the airplane’s engine shutdown and it took numerous attempts for the pilots to restart it,” according to the National Transportation Safety Board’s preliminary report. “Upon parking, the pilots reported to the attendants that the airplane’s fuel/air mixture was difficult to establish at such a high density altitude and that if you operate the engine too lean its temperature will exceed normal operation parameters.”

On board were Francisco De La Mora, 43, owner and pilot of the plane; his wife Lorena De La Mora, 39; their 6-year-old daughter Esmeralda De La Mora; Harold Cardwell, 60; and his wife, Kin Cardwell, 41.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*