



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Ravenna, MI	Accident Number:	CEN15LA235
Date & Time:	05/01/2015, 1225 CDT	Registration:	N5606X
Aircraft:	LATHROP STEVEN A B8M	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On May 1, 2015, about 1225 central daylight time, a homebuilt gyrocopter, N5606X, registered to the pilot/owner, was destroyed when it collided with power lines while maneuvering in the vicinity of Ravenna, Michigan. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant, sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed in the vicinity and a flight plan was not filed. The local flight was being conducted under the provisions of Federal Code of Regulations Part 91. The flight originated from Riverview, Michigan, about 1125.

The single-seat gyrocopter wreckage was resting in a deep ditch on the north side of Sherman Road near the intersection of Wunsch Road in Moorland Township near Ravenna, MI. Evidence at the accident site showed that the gyrocopter had impacted 30-foot high power lines, consequently breaking the two of the lines. The power line pole on the north side of Sherman Road was broken and unattached to its base. The pilot's headgear showed thermal damage to the face shield and soot was evident inside of the shield and around the face relief of the helmet, consistent with electrical arcing. The helmet was found in a ditch just west of Wunsch Road about 40 feet from the wreckage.

The gyrocopter's rotor mast was broken off, about seat height. The rotor blades were coned upward consistent with low RPM and high loading. The trailing edges of the blades exhibited buckling between fasteners. One rotor blade had scuff marks on the bottom side. The other blade had buckling failure in the aft direction. One of the propeller blades of the pusher propeller was separated and was found about 50 yards beyond the wreckage. The broken blade leading edge exhibited leading edge marks consistent with contact with the broken power line wires.

The Volkswagen engine appeared to be mostly intact. The crank would rotate by hand, but was limited due to adjacent impact damage. Automotive gasoline was present in the fuel filter and some gas was dripping out of the carburetor when first responders arrived. The broken ends of the power lines showed some broom straw signatures, some cut failures, and some right angle bending near the wire failures. The wires consisted of five aluminum wires wrapped about a steel core.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	LATHROP STEVEN A	Registration:	N5606X
Model/Series:	B8M NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	Yes		
Operator:	LATHROP STEVEN A	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:		Observation Time:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Temperature/Dew Point:	22° C
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots, 120°	Visibility	10 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.92 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Riverview, MI	Destination:	Ravenna, MI (MKG)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alexander Lemishko
Additional Participating Persons:	Arthur R Steffes; FAA FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.