

Student pilot dies in crash at city airport

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Flyer could have had medical problem, airport manager said

James Ross, the 55-year-old student pilotkilled in a Sunday crash at Gothenburg Airport, was “one of the best you’ve ever seen.”

Airport manager Dennis Brown, the first one on the scene following the 10:30 a.m. crash, described Ross as a good pilot.

Ross was the North Platte information systems director.

From what Brown knows about aircraft, he said he thinks details of the crash, such as the fact the plane was headed toward the center line of the runway, indicate that Ross could have suffered a traumatic medical event.

An autopsy was done Monday but results were not available at press deadline.

The plane crashed 50 yards east of the beginning of the airport’s grass runway, according to Gothenburg police officials.

No one else was in the two-seater Cessna 150 with Ross, police said.

Federal Aeronautics Administration and National Transportation Safety Board officials arrived Monday to determine the cause of the crash.

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Brown said Ross was trained to fly while in the U.S. Marine Corps after the Vietnam War and was about 20 hours away from receiving his pilot's license.

Ross was leasing a private plane housed at the airport, Brown said.

The aircraft, that Brown estimated at a value of \$20,000, was totalled.

Besides Brown, other pilots and members of the airport authority were there when the plane crashed, interviewing a candidate to teach flight lessons.

Brown said he knows of no other fatal plane crashes at the local airport but noted that a pilot was killed in a spray plane accident several years ago near the airport.

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