

# Crash probe begins



Brian Corn/The Wichita Eagle

Firefighters battle a blaze Thursday at the FlightSafety International building at Mid-Continent Airport in Wichita shortly after a Beechcraft King Air crashed into the building, killing four people.

## NTSB arrives to investigate plane accident that killed four

BY STAN FINGER, KELSEY RYAN, RICK PLUMLEE, TIM POTTER AND MOLLY MCMILLIN  
The Wichita Eagle

**M**ike Metz was working on the roof of a building near Mid-Continent Airport on Thursday morning when he said he noticed a low-flying plane just south of the FlightSafety International building.

"The next thing I knew, it hit the top of the roof of FlightSafety," Metz said.

He immediately saw black smoke and red flames — and then he didn't see anything.

"It was like it sank down in the roof," Metz said.

The crash of a Beechcraft King Air B200 shortly before 10 a.m. killed four people — the pilot and three people inside the building — and injured five others, authorities said. Four of the five injured people were transported to Via Christi Hospital St. Francis and later released. One remained hospitalized in serious condition, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Three of the dead are from the Wichita area, authorities said; the fourth is from another country. Names were not released by authorities pending notification of family.

The pilot was identified as Mark Goldstein, 53, by Ron Ryan, founder of Ryan International Airlines and a former colleague of Goldstein's. He said Goldstein's family authorized him to release the name to the media.

Goldstein, who was the only per-

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See more photos and videos from the crash site.

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- Aviation experts say King Air normally a reliable plane
- First fatal crash at Mid-Continent since 2000

## Friends: Pilot in airport crash 'very experienced'

BY KELSEY RYAN  
The Wichita Eagle

The pilot of the twin-engine aircraft that crashed on top of a building at Mid-Continent Airport was very experienced, his friends and fellow pilots say.

Mark Goldstein crashed in his King Air B200 just after takeoff Thursday morning. The crash killed four people — including Goldstein — and injured five others.

Goldstein, 53, was an independent contract pilot, said Ron Ryan, founder of Ryan International Airlines and a former colleague of Goldstein's. Ryan verified Goldstein's death with the media and said he was authorized to speak by the family.

Though official reports as to what

caused the accident likely won't be released for months or years, authorities said Thursday that Goldstein lost power in his left engine.

Ryan said an engine failure "truly is rare" for King Airls.

"If you can feather the failed engine, it'll fly all day long," Ryan said. "If you can't feather the engine ... then you've got a handful of airplane and it's a real struggle to keep it flying."

If the plane was fully fueled, the weight of that fuel would have added to the challenges the pilot would have had to keep it airborne, he said.

With the loss of power in the left engine, the plane likely would have turned to the right because of the

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Courtesy of Brian Youngers

Mark Goldstein crashed in his King Air B200 just after takeoff Thursday morning. The crash killed four people, including Goldstein.



# FlightSafety operates five centers in Wichita

BY MOLLY MCMILLIN  
The Wichita Eagle

The building struck by a Beechcraft King Air B200 at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport shortly after takeoff Thursday is one of FlightSafety International's five centers in Wichita.

Wichita has the highest concentration of FlightSafety centers in the world, the company has said. Pilots and maintenance technicians come to Wichita from around the world to train in Cessna, Learjet, Beechcraft and Hawker products.

The plane that crashed just before 10 a.m. Thursday hit

FlightSafety's Cessna Learning Center's north building at 1851 S. Airport Road. Inside the building, pilots receive aviation training on Cessna Citation business jets and Caravan turboprops.

At any given time, about 100 employees and clients are in the building, authorities said Thursday.

They train in classrooms and inside advanced technology simulators to become type-rated to fly the Citation jets or to receive recurrent training, designed to keep pilots' skills fresh and top of mind.

Four people died in Thursday's fiery crash, including

the pilot and three victims inside the building. Three of the victims are from the Wichita area — including pilot Mark Goldstein — and one is from another country, authorities said.

Authorities did not release information about the identities of those killed, but they did say that three were found inside a flight simulator in the building and one was found on the roof. A former colleague of Goldstein released his name to the media.

"All of us at FlightSafety International are greatly saddened by the tragic accident that occurred at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport impacting

our Cessna Learning Center," the company said in a statement. "We are continuing to work with authorities to assist them in their investigation and to ensure the safety and well being of our clients and teammates. No further details are available at this time."

It thanked those who have been in contact.

"Your outpouring of sympathy touches and strengthens us. Every day we hear that it's our teammates who make FlightSafety great," the statement said. "We agree. Which makes the tragic events at our Wichita center that much more heartbreaking. Please continue to keep those most

affected in your thoughts and prayers."

FlightSafety has Cessna pilot training and maintenance learning centers housed in three buildings at Mid-Continent Airport. Its new maintenance center — which features 15 classrooms, four engine labs, an avionics laboratory and a hangar — opened last year.

Bombardier Learjet has a combined pilot-training and maintenance-training center at the airport. And Beechcraft has a pilot-training center and a maintenance-training center in east Wichita.

Every year, thousands of clients come to Wichita for

training at one of the centers.

FlightSafety was founded by pilot Al Ueltschi at New York's La Guardia Airport in 1951. He took the company public in 1968. Today, it's owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway.

Companywide, FlightSafety employs 1,800 instructors who provide 3,500 individual courses for 135 aircraft types, according to its website. They use more than 300 simulators and have customers from 167 countries.

Reach Molly McMillin at 316-268-6708 or mmmillinn@wichitaegle.com. Follow her on Twitter: @mcmillinn.

## PILOT

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drag, said Doug Range, head of the Experimental Aviation Association's local chapter. He said he had previously met Goldstein at an aviation safety seminar.

"For a little while, there will be a lot of unanswered questions," Range said. "That's one thing about the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). They are good about putting these crash scenes back together and saying, 'This is what happened.'"

Goldstein was a very experienced pilot, said Marc Browning, who said he met Goldstein after flying model planes together about five years ago.

"He was a great pilot, really good air traffic controller and a very kind person," Browning said.

Dwayne Clemens, owner of the Stearman Airfield in Benton, said he had known Goldstein for more than 20 years.

"He was a good guy and loved flying," Clemens said. "It's a loss for the community and a shame that other families are involved."

Goldstein was a frequent guest speaker for Joseph Beck's flight instruction classes at Stearman Airfield.

"We'd have Mark speak, do a cookout and have safety meetings where he'd give talks to help out my flight students," said Beck, a primary flight instructor and ophthalmologist. "He was my go-to expert on the local air traffic control system. He

knew the local area better than anybody."

"He was an excellent and current pilot and one of those rare individuals that would do absolutely anything for you."

Beck said that he can't imagine the crash being the result of pilot error.

"It had to be more than that, because he was well-trained and current," he said. "The proper response of the pilot didn't generate what he needed. It had to be something else, because his piloting skills were just excellent."

Goldstein became an air traffic controller in 1983 and came to Wichita in 1989, according to The Eagle's archives. He was an air traffic controller for the Navy before coming to Mid-Continent, Beck said.

Goldstein had recently re-

tired from air traffic control to provide professional pilot services, Beck said.

Goldstein recently attended the National Business Aviation Association conference in Orlando, Fla., according to his Facebook account, which shows numerous photos of him flying and with planes.

He had previously won awards for his work in air traffic control, including an Air Traffic Control Specialist of the Year Award by the Air Traffic Controllers Association in 2005 at its 50th annual conference in Grapevine, Texas.

Contributing: Stan Finger of The Eagle

Reach Kelsey Ryan at 316-269-6752 or kryan@wichitaegle.com. Follow her on Twitter: @kelsey\_ryan.

## Airplane in Wichita crash had been sold back to Beechcraft

BY JERRY SIEBENMARK  
The Wichita Eagle

The Beechcraft King Air B200 that crashed Thursday morning at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport was manufactured 15 years ago and had been reacquired by its manufacturer earlier this fall.

Federal Aviation Administration records show Beechcraft Corp. at 10511 E. Central was the registered owner of the twin-engine turboprop airplane that received its airworthiness certificate on Dec. 18, 1999.

The airplane's prior owner was Sheetz Inc., an Altoona, Pa.-based convenience store chain, said Sheetz spokeswoman Tarah Arnold. "We sold the plane on Sept. 25 ... back to Beechcraft," Arnold said.

An official from Textron Aviation, the owner of Beechcraft, said in an e-mail to The Eagle on Thursday that the company would not comment on any stories related to Thursday's crash because it has been "invited" to participate in the National Transportation Safety Board investigation.

That investigation has just begun, and no conclusions about the cause of the deadly crash are expected for months. It typically takes more than a year for the NTSB to render a final report for an airplane crash, although it often releases preliminary data sooner.

Two aviation experts described the King Air line of airplanes as reliable.

"The 200 was the first King Air with a T-tail," said David Bernstorf of BSC Consulting, who was an engineer at Beechcraft and its predecessor companies for 37 years. "When I came to work at Beech, that was the first project I was assigned to."

Bernstorf said there have been a number of variations since the 200, the original certification of which was in December 1973. He said the B200 model, the type in Thursday's crash, featured upgraded engines and an upgrade to its four-blade propellers.

"It's a pretty rugged airplane, has good performance," he said.

"It's been around forever, and it's a workhorse," said John Eakin, owner of Texas-based Air Data Research. Eakin is a commercially licensed pilot and aircraft mechanic, and his company analyzes aircraft safety and crash information.

He also said the Pratt & Whitney turbine engines that power the King Air have the same characteristics as the airplane.

"It's a good, solid engine that's been around forever," Eakin said.

He said the King Air traces its history back to the Beech Queen Air in the 1950s.

"Just offhand, I can't think of any really spectacular problem that's been found on them," Eakin said.

"A lot of airplanes are known for problems. The King Air isn't known for anything bad."

## PLANE

From Page 1A

son on board the plane en route to Arkansas, was a retired air traffic controller. He was working as an independent contract pilot, Ryan said.

The aircraft, manufactured in 1999, was owned by Beechcraft, according to a report from the Federal Aviation Administration.

In statements late Thursday, Air Safety Senior Investigator Leah Yeager of the National Transportation Safety Board described the King Air as "flying low and slow before it entered a left turn" after taking off from Runway One at Mid-Continent, according to witness reports.

"It continued to turn left and then impacted the building," Yeager said, gesturing to the damaged FlightSafety building.

"The pilot did report that he had a left engine problem, so we're very interested in what that may be."

Nicole Alexander, a spokeswoman for Wichita-based Textron Aviation, which owns Beechcraft, said in a statement that the NTSB had asked Textron to participate in the investigation of the crash.

"As a party to the investigation, the company is prohibited by NTSB regulation from divulging any information about the accident or investigation," she said in the statement.

In brief statements near the crash site Thursday afternoon, Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer called the loss of life "certainly saddening."

"Keep these families and these people in your thoughts and prayers," Brewer said. "This is certainly a tragic moment for our community."

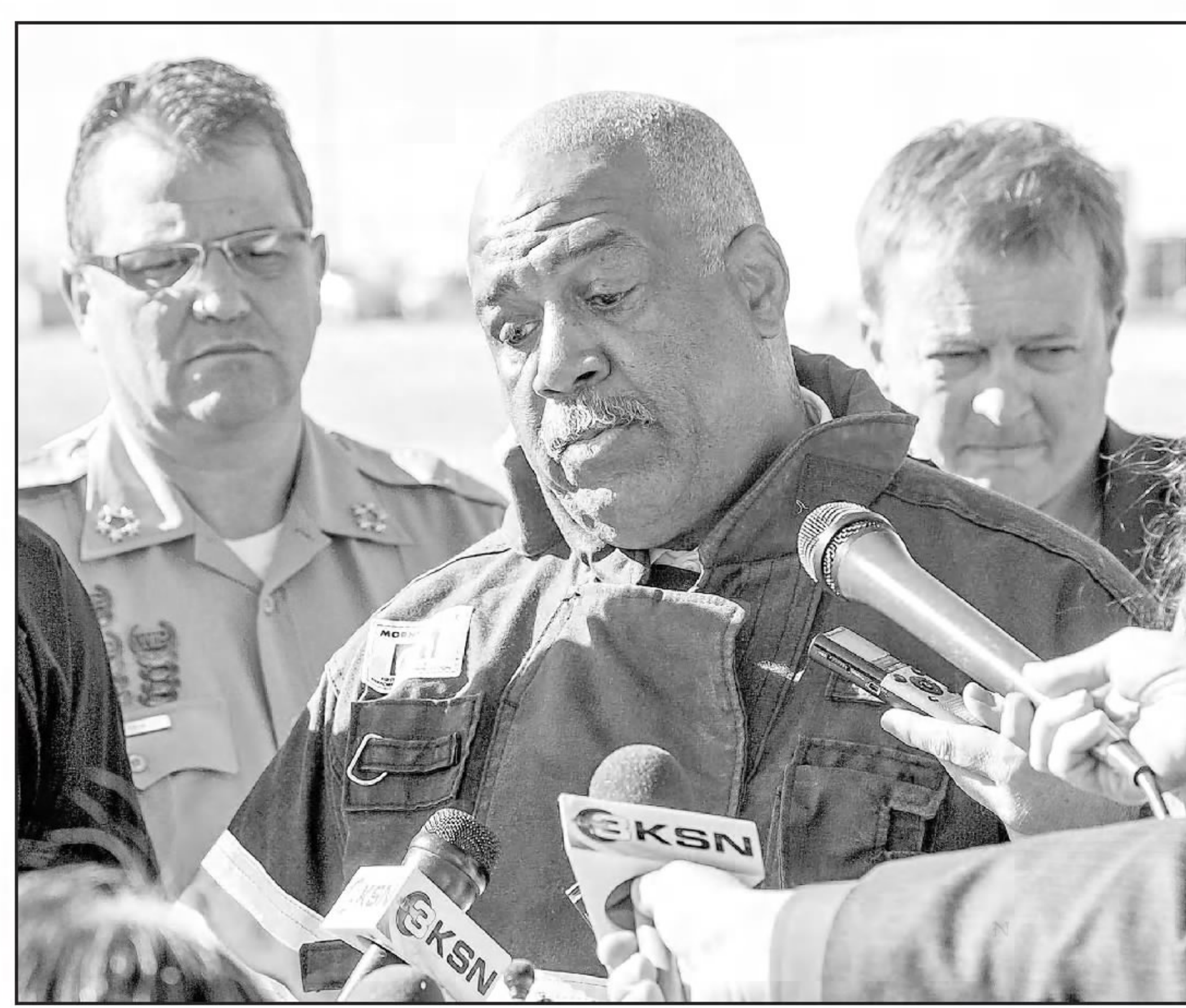
### Recovery process

Three of the bodies were found in one flight simulator inside the building and one was found on the roof, authorities said. The bodies were not removed because of structural concerns with the building, authorities said.

About 100 people normally work in the FlightSafety building at 1851 S. Airport Road. Shortly after the crash, employees who had escaped the building were gathered in a nearby field as authorities tried to determine who was missing.

For some time Thursday, authorities thought there might be four additional bodies in one of four flight simulator rooms. That area couldn't be searched because of "collapse concerns that we have," Wichita Fire Marshal Brad Crisp said at the time.

Heavy equipment and a structural engineer were



Mike Hutmacher/The Wichita Eagle

Wichita Fire Chief Ron Blackwell speaks during a news conference Thursday after a King Air plane crashed into the FlightSafety building at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport.

brought to the site to help shore up the area long enough to see whether the missing people were in the fourth room, Crisp said. It was later determined no one was in the room.

FlightSafety is an international aviation training company owned by Berkshire Hathaway with corporate offices in New York City. It provides flight training and has several buildings in Wichita.

Wichita Fire Chief Ron Blackwell said the crash impact left the building so structurally unsound that firefighters were unable to begin retrieval efforts Thursday. Crews were awaiting the arrival of NTSB officials on Thursday evening to assess the site before heading in.

Yeager, one of six NTSB investigators who arrived Thursday evening, confirmed that the building was structurally unsound and said that the NTSB would not begin looking at the aircraft until the building was "safe to enter."

A structural engineer called out earlier in the day determined "a significant portion of the building is unsafe," Blackwell said.

Behind him, the east face of the building was partially charred, and a section of bricks missing from the roofline were among debris scattered in the parking lot below. The plane, Blackwell said, was in pieces on the roof and the ground.

The NTSB "might get us some heavy equipment to take some walls down and move things that are inside the building that are encumbering recovery operations," Blackwell said. Once that's done, firefighters will be allowed to enter the building and begin removing remains, he said.

"That will likely be a long and complicated process," Blackwell said.

Some assessment was ex-

pected to be done Thursday night, but "the real work will probably begin at daylight" Friday, Blackwell added.

In the meantime, Yeager said, the NTSB has started collecting information about the pilot — including his background and maintenance log books — is working with air traffic control and is gathering information on weather conditions at the time of the crash.

After the victims' bodies are removed from the building, NTSB investigators will begin surveying the crash site and get a layout of the plane, she said. The wreckage then will be collected, moved to another location and studied.

A preliminary report from the NTSB is expected within five days. That document, to be posted on the NTSB's website, www.nts.gov, will give basic details of the crash.

Over the next six to nine months, investigators will assess the crash site and airplane wreckage, Yeager said, and issue a more detailed report, including the crash's cause.

That document could take a year or more to be released.

### 'Horrific firefight'

A minute after the plane was cleared by air-traffic control for takeoff, the pilot declared an emergency and said he had lost his left engine, according to the control tower's audio tape.

The FAA confirmed the plane was trying to return shortly after takeoff when it hit the building. The flight was headed to Mena, Ark., according to FlightAware.

The plane gouged a large hole in the building's northeast corner. The plane crashed on the roof of the company's north building, FlightSafety International spokesman Steve Phillips said.

"Takeoff was normal until an aircraft emergency was declared," airport police and

fire Chief Roger Xanders said.

The roof of the building burst into flames upon the plane's impact, according to a witness. The call came in to 911 at 9:49 a.m., a Sedgwick County dispatcher said.

Firefighters engaged in "a horrific firefight for several minutes," Blackwell said, before crews were pulled out because of concerns the building was unsafe from the fire and impact of the crash.

The primary challenge for firefighters was burning jet fuel that created intense heat, he added.

By 1 p.m., the fire was under control and three of the six firetrucks had left the scene. Fire crews were expected to remain at the site overnight to monitor hot spots.

Commercial flights were halted for a short time to allow emergency responders to reach the crash site, said Wichita Police Deputy Chief John Speer.

This was the first fatal crash on Mid-Continent property since three people died in 2000 when a business jet crashed shortly after takeoff. Anyone who witnessed Thursday's crash or has video footage of the crash was asked by city officials to call 316-946-4710.

### 'Sad sight'

One witness, Brian Youngers, said he was across the street from the building talking to the manager of an avionics repair company at the time of the crash.

"We heard this 'vroom,'" he said. "It was way too loud, way too close. We were like, 'Holy crap.'"

Another witness, Lana Johnson, said she had just stepped outside the post office, which is less than half a mile north of the crash site, when she heard a sound.

"I've never heard a sound like that," she said. Johnson said it was a loud, muffled noise, as if someone had just dropped pots and pans.

She saw thick billowing smoke and soon heard sirens. "It's a sad sight," Johnson said. "It's sad to think that people were trapped in there."

A postal employee who works at the nearby post office saw the plane go down.

The man, who would not give his name, said the plane was banking and turning. The plane's nose was down about 15 degrees, came up level and then crashed, he said.

"I knew it was at the wrong place at the wrong time because it was way, way too low," he said. "I saw it impact. It immediately went to flames."

Contributing: Suzanne Perez Tobias, Amy Renee Leiker and Jerry Siebenmark of The Eagle

## Last fatal crash at Wichita's Mid-Continent occurred in 2000

BY SUZANNE PEREZ TOBIAS  
The Wichita Eagle

The victims in Thursday's crash at Mid-Continent Airport were the first aircraft casualties on the airport's property in 14 years.

The last fatal crash at the airport occurred on Oct. 10, 2000, when a Bombardier Challenger 604 business jet on a test flight from Mid-Continent crashed on takeoff. The jet crashed through a fence on the edge of the airport's property and burned in the middle of Tyler Road.

All three people aboard — pilot Bryan Ireland, co-pilot Eric Fiore and flight-test engineer David Riggs — died from injuries received in that crash.

A 52-year-old Lawrence man piloting a Federal Express cargo plane was killed in November 2012 when he crashed shortly after takeoff about two miles south of Mid-Continent.

In the Bombardier crash, the National Transportation Safety Board said in a report that pilot error contributed to the fatal crash.

Investigators with the NTSB, the federal agency that investigates air crashes, concluded that the pilot pulled too aggressively on the control yoke of the aircraft on takeoff. That action caused the aircraft's nose to pitch up excessively, which



Fernando Salazar/File photo  
**Wichita firefighters use axes to break out the windows of a downed Bombardier executive jet west of Wichita's Mid-Continent Airport in 2000.**

then caused fuel to shift backward during the acceleration and takeoff, the report said.

Bombardier Aerospace agreed with the NTSB's conclusion. But the company also came in for criticism in the report, which said the pilots' briefing before the flight was inadequate.

Fiore's wife, Carol Fiore, recently published a book, "Flight Through Fire," which chronicles the test pilot's final days and his devotion to aviation.

Before the October 2000 crash, the last casualties at the Wichita airport happened in 1973, when three people died in two separate crashes.

Reach Suzanne Perez Tobias at 316-268-6567 or stobias@wichitaegle.com. Follow her on Twitter: @suzannetobias.