**SF 330**

**Aircraft Accident Investigation**

**Current Event Summary # 4**

**Luis Bográn**

**Title of article:** Pilot dies, passenger hurt in plane crash in San Jacinto County

**Author:** Samantha Ptashkin

**Sources:**

Local 2 News Houston

<http://www.click2houston.com/news/authorities-responding-to-plane-crash-in->san-jacinto-county/28288780

ABC 13

<http://abc13.com/news/faa-one-dies-in-plane-crash-in-san-jacinto-county/327021/>

**Date:** Sept 29, 2014

On the afternoon of Saturday, September 27, 2014, 44-year-old Marcus Schmitt, from Shepherd, was flying an experimental aircraft built at home by him. Rene Weatherford, of Houston, accompanied him on the flight. At about 4:30 P.M. the experimental plane ran intro a tree line in Shepherd, near San Jacinto County, Texas. The pilot, Marcus Schmitt, died at the scene, while his passenger, Mr. Weatherford, was taken to the hospital via Life Flight, a company that provides life saving transport to ill people. Mr. Weatherford was taken to the hospital with two broken legs and several fractures, authorities said.

According to a state trooper, witnesses said the pilot overshot the runway of the Lake Water Wheel Airport on Highway 223, and ran into a tree line. Witnesses say they saw the plane falling apart when it hit the tree line. FAA investigators were expected to arrive on Sunday, September 28, 2014, to initiate their investigation.

A probable cause has yet to be identified. It is too early to know what happened. However, the fact that the plane was an experimental plane, built by the pilot at home, will definitely give investigators a better starting point. The fact that the aircraft was built at home leaves a lot more room for “manufacturer defect, being that the pilot was sort of the manufacturer. Was the plane supposed to start falling apart when it his the tree line? The quality of the work can be questioned because it was not performed in a controlled setting with harsh quality controls systems employed at large airplane factories. I hope the investigation will shed some light on this accident. Maybe it was simply a pilot error and not a manufacturer defect.