



National Transportation Safety Board

Heart of Texas Hot Air
Balloon Rides
Kubíček BB85Z Balloon
Lockhart, Texas
July 30, 2016
Bill English
Investigator-in-Charge



Exemplar Photos



Note: These photos were not taken during the accident flight

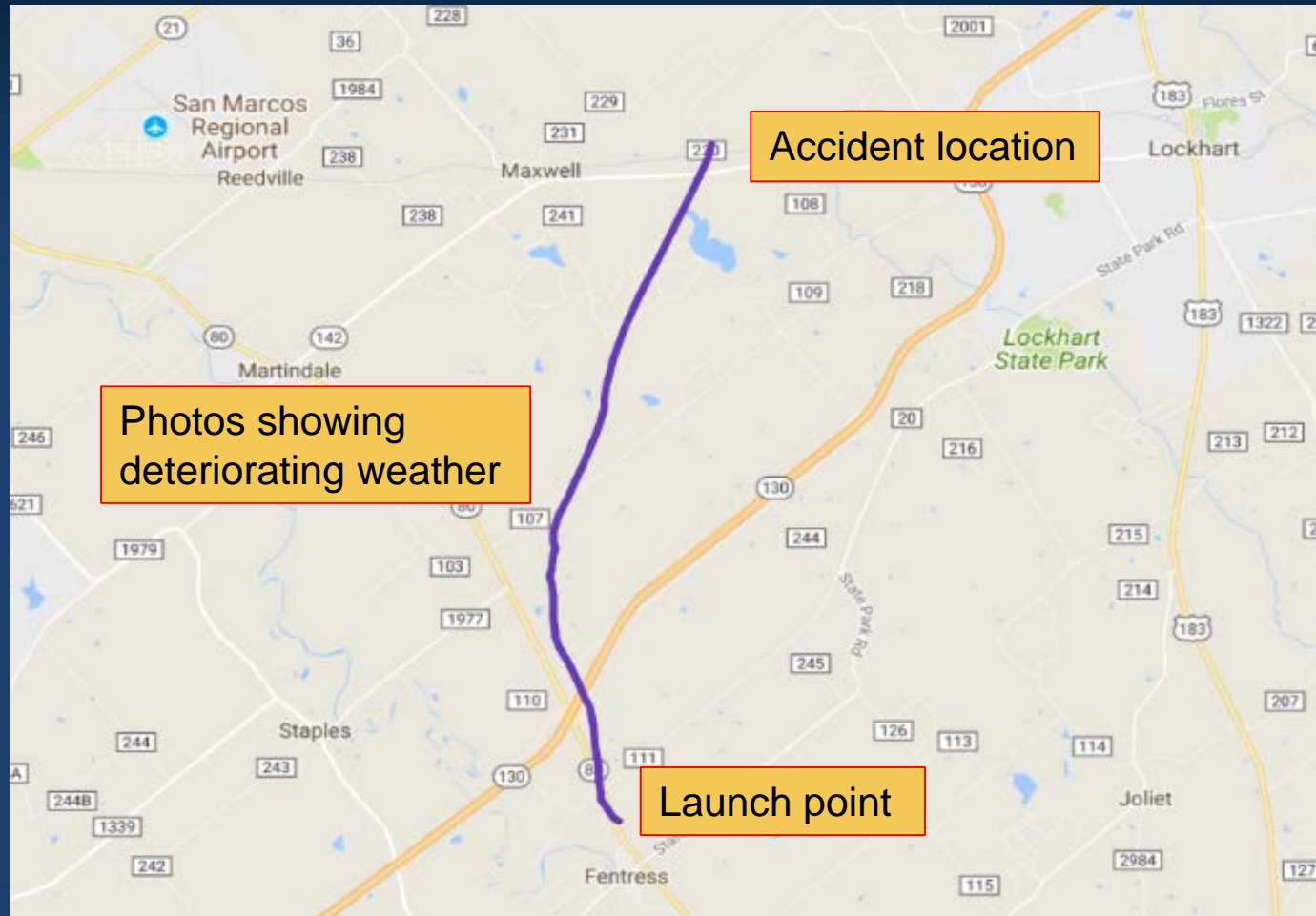
Background Information

- Passengers book flights on line
- Operator is one-man operation
 - Part-time ground crew helpers
- Pilot received weather briefing
 - Close temperature/dew point spread
- Departed private airstrip ~ 7:00 am

Prelaunch (accident flight)



Route of Flight



Deteriorating Weather



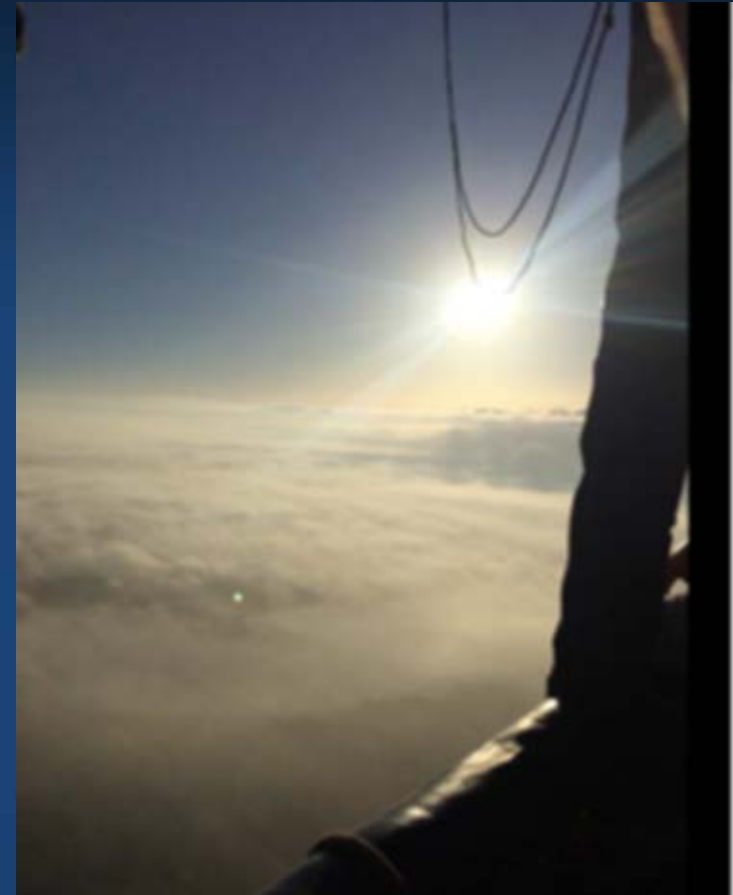
19 mins after takeoff



24 mins after takeoff

Sequence of Events

- Clouds and fog filled in
- Ground crew lost sight of and contact with balloon



4 minutes before accident

Powerline Impact

- Balloon struck high voltage lines
- Contact with lines resulted in electrical arcing, severing cables
- Basket separated, crashed directly below power lines and burned
- Envelope traveled about ½ mile farther



Pilot Background

- 1996 airman medical; expired in 1999

Not required for balloon pilots

- History of drug/alcohol offenses
- Potentially impairing medical conditions
- Impairing medications

Findings and Safety Issues

- No airworthiness issues
- Pattern of poor decision-making
 - Flight into deteriorating weather
 - Operation with impairing medical conditions and medications
- Safety issues
 - Medical certification of commercial balloon pilots
 - FAA oversight of commercial passenger-carrying balloon operations

Staff

- David Bowling
- Noel Coleman
- Kristi Dunks
- Bill English
- Rolando Garcia
- Erik Grosof
- Tom Jacky
- David Lawrence
- Ed Malinowski
- Jeff Marcus
- Stephanie Matonek
- Mary Pat McKay
- Brian Murphy
- Andy Olvis
- Joe Panagioutou
- Sean Payne
- Amy Penwell
- Joel Rebholz
- Paul Suffern
- Nicholas Webster
- Eric Weiss

Parties/Annex 13

- Federal Aviation Administration
- Ústav pro odborně technické zjišťování příčin leteckých nehod
- Kubíček Balloons
- Balloon Federation of America
(party to hearing)

