

NTSB: Mechanical Failure Unlikely Factor in KS Crash

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - Federal investigators say mechanical failure likely didn't play a role in a plane crash that killed a pilot and flight instructor near an airport in Topeka.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reports that the National Transportation Safety Board says in a preliminary report that investigators found "no mechanical anomalies that would have precluded normal operation" of the 1965 Piper PA-30 before it went down July 31 near Philip Billard Municipal Airport.

The crash killed 61-year-old pilot Dr. William Leeds of Topeka and 55-year-old flight instructor James Bergman of Leawood.

The newspaper reports that Leeds was an experienced pilot who was working on a new multi-engine land airplane rating for his pilot certificate, and that the crash happened during a practice flight a day before his scheduled examination.

Associated Press