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Pilot dies in crash

The wreckage of this experimental airplane lies twisted in a field near the Lewistown airport following its crash Sunday during the Central Montana Pilots Association air show.

The pilot, veteran flyer John Burns, 57, of Sidney, died when the plane failed to pull out of a low-altitude maneuver before some 600 horrified fans.

Officials eye crash

LEWISTOWN (AP) — Federal Aviation Administration officials ended the first part of their investigation Monday into the Sunday crash of an experimental airplane in front of 600 horrified spectators.

Killed in the crash of the small, home-made craft was

John Burns, 57 of Sidney, the owner of an air charter service.

Don Woodard, head of the FAA flight service station at the Lewistown airport, said at the time of the crash there were three FAA accident specialists on hand who witnessed the crash.

Burns was killed while performing a low-altitude maneuver during an acrobatic demonstration at the Central Montana Pilot's Association air show.

One witness to the accident said Burns was doing a series of rolls and was getting lower and lower with each one.

The witness said that as Burns came out of the fourth and final roll and began to level off the plane slammed into the ground nose first.

The plane struck the ground about 900 feet from where the crowd was standing.

Woodard said it is standard procedure to have an accident specialist on hand during air shows. He said the other two were there by accident, watching the show.

Following the crash, he said, the three men went immediately to work and completed their investigation.

The plane was taken from the field and put in a hangar at the airport.

Tom Walento, FAA operations officer at the airport, said it appeared the plane was functioning properly, but that he could not say for certain until the investigation is completed, which could probably be a month.