28 seconds of horror

The 132 people aboard US Airways Flight 427 from Chicago didn’t know what hit them. In less time than a television commercial, the Boeing 737-3B7 plummeted from its approach to Pittsburgh International Airport into a Hopewell hillside. Based on flight data, here’s what experts believe happened Sept. 8, 1994.

Wreckage of plane was returned to airline

By Jim Ristuccia  Staff Writer

The remains of 427 were given back to US Airways, but the airline’s transport system, locked the cockpit, and 24,000 of the 278 passengers were locked in the airport.

US Airways’ fleet

Boeing 737, the most popular aircraft in the company’s fleet, is the type of plane that went down. The airline has 150 of them.

About the Boeing 737

The 737-300 was the most accident-prone aircraft among US Airways planes.

Rudder changes mandated

The Federal Aviation Administration recently issued an airworthiness directive mandating changes to the rudder system on the 737-300. The airline says it’s in line with new regulations.

Rudder power control unit

The rudder power control unit is an important part of the plane’s control system. A failure in this area can result in a loss of control.

Crash site

The crash site is located in the southwestern part of the United States. The plane was on a direct route from Chicago to Pittsburgh.

Airplane approaches stall: 7:03:05 p.m.

As the pilot approaches stall, the plane’s nose goes down, and the stall warning sounds. The pilot immediately pulls back on the control stick, but the plane continues to descend.

Rudder changes

On the 737-300, the rudder system is designed to provide control over the airplane’s roll. However, on 427, the rudder failed, causing the plane to roll over.

Intended path of Flight 427

The flight was scheduled to land at Pittsburgh International Airport. However, the plane was in the process of a takeoff when it crashed.

By Doug B. Stohrer and Bob Newell

Sunday, September 5, 2004

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

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