

Plane search moves to state

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ATLANTA (AP) — The Florida wing of the Civil Air Patrol has transferred responsibility to the Georgia wing in the search for a small plane carrying an Indiana family that disappeared amid strange circumstances, an agency spokeswoman said in Florida.

The Piper Saratoga, taking seven passengers from Boca Raton, Fla., to Ridgeville, Ind., was last sighted about 3:30 p.m. Sunday when it stopped to refuel in Jesup and radioed to Macon's air control tower for a weather update, said Capt. Jean Stockton of the Florida Civil Air Patrol.

The responsibility was transferred to the Georgia wing Wednesday night based on the refueling report, Ms. Stockton said.

She said the circumstances of the disappearance were unusual because on Monday one of the plane's passengers canceled a doctor's appointment.

"It gets even stranger," Ms. Stockton said, declining to elaborate.

The plane was piloted by Jim Cox, 49, who runs a factory in Ridgeville that makes furnaces. Passengers included his parents, William and Anna Cox; his daughter, Angela Cox; his cousin, Twila Love; a friend

of Angela's, Christine Neville; and a baby, Dustin Haynes, Ms. Stockton said.

Angela and Christine had been expected in school Monday. A relative of the family notified authorities Monday that the plane was missing.

Christine's mother, Connie Andrews of Ridgeville, said her daughter has flown with the Coxes before.

"When she goes with them I never worry," Ms. Andrews said. "I've always known (Cox) to be very cautious."

Ms. Andrews said she wasn't worried until the CAP listed Cox's plane as missing.

"There have been times it has been three or four days late," she said. "If the weather's bad, he doesn't fly."

Ms. Stockton said Cox was not qualified to fly in conditions of limited visibility such as the bad weather that prevailed Sunday.

The CAP requested public assistance in locating the plane, which was painted mainly white with red and black trim.

When asked if authorities had reason to believe the plane crashed, Ms. Stockton said, "We have reason to believe that it may be on the ground."

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