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By Mike Jones

Cessna Pilots Magazine, originally published as a sidebar: August 2025

Joe Marshall and Holly Hayden are thrilled with flying, but know their relative inexperience requires extra caution.

“On any weekday night, you’ll find Joe and me sitting in the living room watching flying safety videos,” Hayden said. “They’ve really helped us to be conscientious and proficient, you know. And that helped with our icing situation.”



Huh? Icing situation?

They were coming back from Marco Island, FL in December 2024, and arrived at Akron just at sunset. Icing was not forecast, and the temperature didn’t hint it would be present. But there it was: a

scattered layer, just as night was approaching. As they descended, ice covered the entire front of the windscreen. Instantly.

“What really struck me was how rapidly we iced over,” Marshall explained. “It was instantaneous. There was no warning. There was no creeping up. It was just getting thicker and thicker and heavier and heavier.”

“It’s kind of a cliché, but it’s true: in an emergency you don’t rise to the occasion, you sink to your training,” Marshall said. “I remembered my training from IFR6: in icing, do something quickly. I knew the airport was right in front of us. I knew it wasn’t a thick layer, only 700 feet or something like that. So we went down. We popped out just fine, but we had ice on both wings and all over the windscreen. We landed at probably 80 or 85 knots. That’s when it really kind of sunk in. That could have been bad. Really, really bad.”

About the Author

Dr. Mike Jones is an entrepreneur who uses his business expertise to help G.A. airports across the country improve their governance and operations, speeding them on their way to more revenues, grants, and community support. He also helps protect them from avaricious developers and reverse the damage caused by ineffectual politicians. He’s been writing for this magazine for nearly a decade, flown 800 Young Eagle missions, and put 4,000 hours in his logbook. He’s always accessible at PilotMike2012@gmail.com.



