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Pa. puzzled by blast in the sky

OIL CITY, Pa. (UPI) — A deep, booming sound — similar to a sonic boom — rumbled across much of western Pennsylvania at about 1:15 p.m. Thursday, prompting a flood of calls from startled citizens to police and fire departments.

Several callers said the boom, heard over a 100-mile-long area from Allegheny County north to Warren County, cracked house and auto windows.

The Federal Aviation Administration's Flight Service Office in Youngstown, Ohio, said it received reports of a bright object seen falling from the sky.

A spokesman for the FAA at Youngstown Municipal Airport said a pilot aboard a TWA airliner flying at 31,000 feet above Somerset in southwestern Pennsylvania reported the descent of a bright, shiny object with a fiery tail. Another plane reported a similar sighting.

The spokesman speculated the object was possibly a meteor or a piece of satellite that created a sonic boom in its plunge into the atmosphere.

Reports varied on the length of the sharp boom. Franklin state police said it lasted a few seconds, but others said it lasted as long as about 30 seconds.