

Dec. 6, 1981

Reports of 'bright light' trickle in

Three Bend residents who reported seeing a bright light streak across the sky Thursday night were not the only ones who witnessed the phenomenon.

Other reports were received throughout Oregon and Washington and in southwest Utah, including three from Central Oregonians.

One report had the object apparently breaking apart and dropping pieces on the Capitol grounds at Salem.

A motorcyclist in Salem said he was riding on Sunnyview Road northeast of Salem about 10:30 p.m. when "The ground lit up all around me."

Bob Welch, Sunday editor of *The Bulletin*, and Jack Hatfield, also of Bend, reported they saw a falling object that lit up the sky for several seconds.

Three other Central Oregonians called *The Bulletin* Friday and Saturday, reporting having seen the object. Butch Hancock, 1830 NE Monterey, said he was driving east on Wells Acres Rd. when he saw it.

"I'm positive it was a flare of some type," said Hancock. "It was about 500 feet in the air. I was about 1,000 feet from it."

Ken Chilcote of Antelope and his girlfriend, Myra Balcom, said they saw the object when their pick-up truck broke down on Highway 26, about two miles west of Government Camp.

"It was light enough to read a paper by," said Chilcote. "It was kind of spooky."

Don Jackson of Bend, retired professor of engineering astronomy at the University of Minnesota, was out of town when the sighting was reported. Advised of it, he said that usually meteorites and similar objects are "a great distance from where they seem to have fallen" and it's difficult to estimate their distance.