

Pre-Dawn Deer Hunt Brings Surprise For Mayor,

UFO Sighted

Had it been Christmas Eve, the light in the east might have been even more important. As it was, on the morning of the last day of the year, a mysterious lighted object seen east of Peabody and probably west of Florence has some Peabody men wondering what they saw.

According to the reports, Peabody Mayor Jay Cook and Rural Mail Carrier Larry Warts were going to a deer blind location about two miles east of Peabody before dawn on the morning of December 31. Cook saw a strange light that seemed to be hovering over a hill to the east -- exactly how far was hard to determine, when they stopped and began moving into the field, the light was seen a bit further south than his original location. It hovered there for a few minutes, then seemed to take off, passing up and over the men and up into the clouds. They report that it made only a slight "swooshing noise", unlike any

plane or helicopter either of them had ever heard.

The object was described by Cook as having a half moon row of bright lights, with a red light and a green light underneath as it rose into the clouds.

Jerry Foth, who was hunting in a nearby area that morning, also reported seeing the strange light, but did not see the object move up and away.

Folks around Peabody are a bit perplexed as to whether to take the matter seriously or as a joke, although both Cook and Warts have been adamant that they saw what they say they saw.

Cook, of course, as the highest officer in Peabody, ought to be a fully reliable source. Warts, who admits that he once hoaxed his wife with a "flying saucer" story, and is known for practical jokes and the like, still

maintains that in this matter he is not kidding.

There is a report that a passing truck driver also saw and reported the strange light.

This is the first UFO sighting reported in this area in several years. A few years ago a local farm family reportedly saw a strange object with blinking lights setting in one of their barn lots, but it disappeared quickly. About 20 years or so ago, there were a couple incidents of drivers being followed by hovering craft, and in one story, the car's electrical system seems to go dead and the car was forced to stop. When the strange object left, the car started up and performed normally again.

None of the deer hunters saw a deer the morning of the incident last week, and they presume the strange craft or light or whatever must have spooked the animals. Of course, they didn't see a deer on several other mornings, too.