

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (UPI) — A director for the National Center for UFO Studies says his agency is ready to declare as official a UFO sighting near Belleville after it reviews subsequent reports of sightings in the area.

Residents, meanwhile, have gotten caught up in UFO fever, said Don Schmitt, director of the non-profit center in Glenview, Ill.

The center began investigating the Jan. 15 sighting after the Federal Aviation Administration office at Aurora, Ill., confirmed it had tracked the object on radar.

The sighting was reported to a Dane County Sheriff's dispatcher by a Belleville patrolman and his neighbor who was riding with him that evening. The two were not alone in their sighting.

"We are investigating a number of related reports that came after the officer's sighting. We are just short of declaring it an official UFO sighting because through extensive investigation, we have found no natural phenomena to explain the sighting away," said Schmitt, who works in Milwaukee. He said he has determined it was not an aircraft.

The Belleville officer and his rider reported seeing three brilliant red, blue and white lights wavering close together in a straight line. Other people have said they saw the same lights and a transparent cigar shape that moved with a whooshing sound.

"Because there has been such a high degree of interest in the sightings in the Belleville area, we were interested in announcing our final determination at a conference at the high school," Schmitt said.

Schmitt said many residents are excited about possible UFO sightings in their area.

"They put up a sign by the first sighting that says 'UFO landing site.' Some of the people in town have T-shirts that say the same thing and others are wearing buttons with 'UFO landing site' on them," he said. "We'd really like to present them with our complete data and findings."

But that plan has run into a snag.

"I personally do not think this is the place for that kind of thing," said Belleville High School Principal Roger Moe. "I'll take the idea to the Board of Education, but if he (Schmitt) is so hot on getting the media together for an announcement, there's several other places he can go."

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