

Pool balloon may have been Delta missile

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — An Atlanta swimming pool owner says one of his promotional balloons that got away may have been the mysterious projectile that nearly hit a Delta Air Lines jet as it flew over West Virginia.

Joe Schuller, owner of Ideal Pool Corp., said he will provide a free pool to anyone recovering the 4-foot balloon, which he said escaped from an Atlanta site June 20.

An object that appeared to be a missile seemed headed straight for Delta Flight 1083 from Pittsburgh to Atlanta on Thursday morning before passing to the side and slightly below the Boeing 737, the pilot told investigators.

Federal Aviation Administrators said Friday they'll probably never know what had the close encounter with the 60 people on the plane, who were flying at 29,500 feet 31 miles northeast of Charleston.

"It may have been a blimp-shaped helium balloon," said Kathleen Bergen, a spokesman for the FAA's regional headquarters in New York. "It's unlikely we'll ever find it, for a lot of reasons."