

Possible UFO spotted in rural Rose Creek area Friday night

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ROSE CREEK — Was it an airplane or an unidentified flying object that hovered over a rural area southeast of Rose Creek Friday evening? That question may never be answered to everyone's satisfaction.

The Mower County Sheriff's Office received a call at about 6 p.m. Friday from a 60-year-old rural Rose Creek man who said unusual-looking lights were hovering near his home. Deputies were dispatched to the scene but reported that they saw only stars.

Garry Ellingson, chief deputy of the Mower County Sheriff's Office, said Saturday that he had not worked on Friday and therefore was unfamiliar with the incident. "I guess some of the (deputies) were joking about someone calling in a sighting last night, but that's about all I know about it," he said.

"There wasn't any report written that I know of..." he added. "Usually, if it (a sighting) is something of any substance they'd have written a report on it. Nothing was written, so therefore we don't even worry about it."

After doing some further checking, Ellingson said Law Enforcement Center personnel had contacted the Rochester Weather Bureau after the apparent UFO sighting "and the only thing that the radar showed was an aircraft in the area. So, apparently, (the sightings) didn't amount to a hill of beans."

Fred Ulven, owner of Ulven Ace Hardware in Rose Creek, which is a hot-

spot for local gossip, said no one he had talked to Saturday said they had seen the UFO. But, he added, several townspeople reported that they had been listening to police scanners Friday night and had heard of the sheriff's office investigation.

The rural Rose Creek man who reported the apparent UFO sighting requested that his name not be printed.

He said he had parked his vehicle in a shed and was walking toward his house when he noticed two lights in the southwestern sky.

"They were coming this way (toward the house) pretty fast, then all of a sudden they started to slow up," he said. "The next time I looked up there they were stopped."

A longer look revealed that there were four lights, not two, he said. Two star-colored lights, one about 10 times brighter than the other, seemed to move in unison, as though they were part of one object, he added.

A smaller, reddish-orange light and a "fair-sized" pale white light revolved around the other two lights about twice each second, the man said.

"To me it looked like a helicopter moving underneath that," he said, but he couldn't make out its shape.

After watching the noiseless object for several minutes, the man said, he went inside. About an hour later, he went back outside and the object was still hovering in the sky. Several minutes later, the object started to move, slowly at first, and then faster. It was out of sight within five minutes, he said.

When told of Ellingson's statement that an airplane had been in the area, the man responded: "I can't believe that. That was no airplane."

The deputies dispatched to the scene didn't look hard enough when they tried to spot the object, he added. "If they would've looked they would have seen (the lights) ... but they looked and thought it was stars," he said.

The object might or might not have been man-made, he said.

"It's funny someone else didn't see it," he said. "I still don't know what the hell it was."

He added that he has never seen a UFO before.

"Somebody else had to have seen that," he said, "but the only way you'd recognize it is if you happened to be walking outside and looking at the sky when it was dark, that's the only reason I (saw it). Otherwise, you'd look up and just think it's two stars up there, a big bright one and a little tiny one."

"It'd be kind of interesting to find out what it was," he said. "It was kind of scary (seeing it), at first."

Dick Aske, area supervisor of the Rochester Airport Tower, said records are not kept of aircraft activity. And even if there had been an aircraft in the area of the apparent UFO sighting that aircraft might not have been in contact with the Rochester tower, he said.

There is no radar at the Austin Municipal Airport. Radar at the Rochester Airport picks up all aircraft flying over 3,000 feet above the Austin area.