



Friday meteor sighted by some in Kan., Colo.

- L&T staff report

As reported in Friday's edition, Leader & Times Managing Editor Larry Phillips related his sighting of a large meteor crossing the western sky over Liberal. Within hours, two others confirmed on the L&T website, they, too, had witnessed the same meteor.

First to confirm the sighting was Janie Johnson Sabata of Liberal.

"Yeah, I seen it this morning, too. Saw one last night about 10:45 to 11 p.m., as well," Sabata wrote.

Later that evening, Garrett M. Jennings, who had driven through Spivy, about 16 miles SSW of Kingman, sent a message about the same meteor.

“Good Evening Mr. Phillips,” he began. “I just finished reading your article online about the meteor that you saw this morning. I also saw this meteor as well! As I was just passing through Spivey, KS, about 1 mile outside of town on Hwy. 42 heading west toward the Flat Ridge II Wind Farm, where I work, I saw the most brilliant light darting downward... My jaw dropped open, and it took me a few seconds just to process how amazing of an act of the universe that I had just witnessed!

“Your story gives me some insight at just how large and far away this meteor may have been, because it seemed just as brilliant and bright as you described it,” Jennings continued. “From the direction I was driving, it appeared to be just a touch south of my direction of travel, to the WSW. I thought to myself at first that it looked like it had fallen right into the wind park, maybe 15-20 miles away, but then reasoned with myself that I really had no perspective on it and that it could in fact be hundreds of miles away. Seeing as how it was quite amazing from my point of view and yours as well, it may have in fact been hundreds of miles from you because Spivey and Liberal are over 175 miles away from one another!

“Also, I have never seen quite as brilliant a shooting star like that in my 25 years. :),” he concluded.

On Monday, Phillips checked the Internet for any news of similar sightings. Though no sightings for that time and date were listed in Kansas, the American Meteor Society (http://www.amsmeteors.org/fireball_event/2013/2618) received nine reports about this fireball seen over Colorado on Oct. 25, 2013. In all of the nine sightings reported to AMS, six said it was seen at 5:30 a.m. MDT, which is 6:30 a.m. here in Kansas – the time Phillips had his sighting. One report said it was 5:31 a.m., one at 5:32 a.m. and the last at 5:40 a.m. Undoubtably, it was the same meteor.

The sighting came from as far north as Peetz, Colo., north of Sterling, and from as far south as Cañon City, Colo., west of Pueblo.

Here are some of the remarks posted at AMS:

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"At first I thought it was a plane, but it was green, moving very fast. I always look at the stars and sky, I work very early in the morning. I have never seen anything like this before."

Colorado Springs, Colo.

"The size of the ball that I was able to see was like looking at a tennis ball falling. It was bright orange and red, with a yellow/green trail that did not persist."

Louisville, Colo.

"This was the biggest object I have ever seen falling in the sky! Significantly bigger than the average."

Cañon City

"I was headed down hill when the meteor came into view from the top left of my windshield and appeared to burn out just above my view of the horizon. It appeared to be heading to ground rather than a streak in the sky. I have never seen anything like this before, it had a round front and a dimer tail. I actually thought it might be an aircraft on fire heading into Buckley AFB but it appeared to be moving a bit too quick for that."

Commerce City, Colo.

And from Peetz, on the northern Colorado border, confirming the meteor was on a north to south trak and earthbound.

"If I were to draw an angle from the horizon vertically straight up to the top of my view of the sky and then follow the fireball, it would create an acute angle of about 20 degrees. It is interesting

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that I saw it from up high left down low to right traveling at approx a 20 degree angle from a perpendicular imaginary line to the horizon."

Peetz

Reports also came in from Highlands Ranch, Colo., Parker, Colo., Calhan, Colo., and Denver.

"What impressed me most was it's size and that it lasted that long," Phillips said. "And it was a comfort seeing that others also noticed and remarked about its size and brilliance.

"That confirmation by others was a relief considering my age and eyesight," he added with a chuckle. "You start wondering if what you saw was really what you saw."