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IN BRIEF

Flaming object spotted in Oregon night sky

PORTLAND — A fireball streaked through the night sky across the western half of the Pacific Northwest on Saturday, startling people all the way from southern Oregon to the Seattle area.

Scientists said the fireball was probably a meteor, and that it likely disintegrated just before any fragments fell into the Pacific Ocean.

Summer Jensen of Portland said she was sitting in her living room with her father when she saw the flash of light outside and rushed to see what it was.

"It was like a big ball of fire ... (and) behind it was a trail of blue," she said. "I've never seen anything like that." Jensen added that the object appeared to be moving slowly.

Michael O'Connor, a duty officer at the Federal Aviation Administration's regional office in Renton, Wash., said he fielded "a whole ton of calls" from people reporting they had seen a bright streak across the sky shortly before 8 p.m.

He said police, pilots and some air traffic controllers described it as "a green ball of fire with a long tail."

He said reports came from as far east as the Tri Cities area in Washington.

"It appears to have come down

over the ocean," said Dick Pugh of the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory in Portland.

He said the object flew over the Pacific Coast, streaking along from south to north.

The last time a meteor was reported striking anything on the ground in Oregon — becoming a meteorite — was in May 1981.

Eugene among top 10 best cities to walk in nation

Two Oregon cities are among the top 10 rated best for walking, according to a national group of doctors.

Eugene ranked No. 8 and Portland was No. 4 on the 2005 list compiled by the American Podiatric Medical Association.

The association ranked the nation's 200 largest cities by such criteria as the number of people who exercise daily and the number of people taking public transportation.

Arlington, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C., was ranked No. 1, while the nation's capital also made the list at No. 6. Two other West Coast cities — San Francisco and Seattle — were ranked second and third, respectively. Laredo, Texas, was ranked last at No. 200.

The list was released to encourage American city dwellers "to get out and walk in an effort to keep their feet and bodies fit," the association said.

"One of the reasons why Eugene ranked fairly high is because of the active lifestyles that the residents lead," association spokeswoman Amie Haer said.

The top 10 list, in order, was: Arlington, Va.; San Francisco; Seattle; Portland; Boston; Washington, D.C.; New York City; Eugene; Jersey City, N.J.; Denver.

— The Associated Press

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