

LIGHTNING DATA CENTER MINUTES

August 14, 2026

MEETING VIA ZOOM, DENVER, COLORADO

Monthly Quote: “Some folk might say it was the lightning, blinding bolts that slashed great ruptures in black plastic cloud-tainers of airborne oceans at Estes Park. Others might claim it was the thunder, great claps of it that reverberated from the mountainsides to squeeze tons of water from inky clouds vying for the same airspace at the top of Big Thompson Canyon.” - The Big Thompson Disaster: A collection of editorial and pictorial material concerning Colorado’s tragic flash flood of July 31, 1976.

Members present: Brewer, Crow, Gartling, Langford, Semple, Yarnell, Guests include Bruce Beckmann & the family of Lashonda Davis.

Meeting began at 11:45am and ended at 1:08pm.

1. The LDC is accepting donations, either as cash or check. If you donate via check, please make your check payable to Steve Clark at 755 S. Clinton Street, #2A; Denver, CO 80247. He will cash the check and keep the cash holdings specifically for the LDC. When the LDC incurs expenses, Steve will pay for services rendered through his bank account using the cash from LDC’s cash holdings. A log will be maintained detailing the inflow and outflow of monies. LDC currently has \$889.00 in cash.
2. Our tireless president Steve Clark was on vacation, and we all join to thank him for all he continues to do for the Lightning Data Center!
3. Our first presenter was Bruce Beckmann - co-director of Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR) education for the Alpine Rescue Team and Alpine Search & Rescue. Recently Bruce delivered a talk on Lightning Awareness for Hikers and SAR Teams. As part of that talk Bruce gathered data on the 7/26/26 lightning injuries and fatality in Mt. Blue Sky. Bruce presented a portion of his talk showing where the lightning was presumed to have struck and the local environment at the time.
4. Next we heard from a young adult male, his mother, and his spouse. He was showing his young daughter how to gather water from a downspout for gardening three weeks ago when lightning struck in the wet environment. In all likelihood the current was conducted from the strike point to him via the moisture in the gutter, thus a contact path rather than a direct strike. He thrown four or five feet and had pain in the ball of his foot, but no visible burns. He was able to get up and move immediately. Within a few days he began to experience memory issues, and has developed functional neurologic seizures. An MRI proved inconclusive. Phil Yarnell was optimistic about his chances for recovery and suggested seeking care from a psychologist who utilizes Cognitive Behavioral Training (CBT). Barbara Brewer suggested that some survivors have had favorable results from Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) and Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT). She also suggested that many lightning survivors suffer from Rhabdomyolysis – a kidney disorder. She offered supportive comments from her experiences,

and mentioned a few other treatments which have helped her son. Phil emphasized that these therapies need to be prescribed after a formal medical evaluation. He suggested connecting with a neurologist who deals with Functional Neurologic Disorder (FND). Ken Langford advocated for workarounds and suggested that his young daughter be assessed for trauma related to witnessing the incident.

5. Barbara Brewer advocated for the lightning survivor Facebook group, and Barb Semple suggested the Lightning Strike & Electrical Shock Survivors International (LS&ESSI) for any persons struck by lightning. Links can be found below.
6. Barb Semple reported having developed ocular rosacea as part of her ongoing sequelae from her lightning injury. She said her eyesight is at risk.
7. This topic was not discussed in the meeting, but July 31, 2026 marked the 50th Anniversary of the deadly Big Thompson Canyon flood of 1976. A symposium was held in Estes Park and your moderator attended. Materials from that symposium can be accessed by contacting the Colorado Climate Center. One of the topics discussed in Q & A was whether climbing to safety from a flash flood is safe in a lightning storm. I suggested one needed to assess the greater hazard and act according to that urgent need.
8. Another tidbit not covered in the meeting: Benjamin Franklin is a four-hour, two-part documentary by Ken Burns that aired on PBS in April 2022. The program contends that Franklin's path to celebrity begins with his association of lightning with electricity.
<https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/benjamin-franklin/>
9. I'd like to acknowledge Robert Gift, who frequently provides lightning related media links to myself and Steve Clark.
10. LDC welcomes your questions. Please send them via e-mail to Steve Clark at sclarktoto@gmail.com. Your medical questions will be forwarded to Dr. Phil Yarnell for his review and will usually be taken up for discussion in the next month's meeting. Please be advised any questions posed are for the general consideration by the group and any answers given do not constitute a formal medical opinion. If a formal evaluation is requested, arrangements can be made directly with Dr. Yarnell. If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 or your local EMS.
11. Questions, comments, error notifications, and critiques of these minutes are welcome. Please send them to Steve Clark. Please keep the communications professional and respectful. They will be forwarded to the appropriate author(s) of the minutes and addressed accordingly.
12. LDC Disclaimer: These minutes do not represent official positions of the LDC or its members. They simply reflect the comments made at the meeting. Furthermore, the LDC does not implicitly or explicitly recommend or endorse any product or service. Any product or service presented in these minutes is done so for purposes of discussion and analysis. The merit (or lack thereof) is open for the consideration and review by the entire membership.

13. Next meeting: Friday, September 11, 2026, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM MST.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kenneth Langford,
Mr. Random Enterprises, Inc.

Lightning Links

This is a monthly listing of periodicals, websites, and videos about lightning and allied areas from a variety of sources. A headline or description is listed, followed by the link. Please note that some of the links are perishable, which means you'll need to go to the source for the information.

Survivor Organizations:

Lightning Strike & Electrical Shock Survivors International (LS&ESSI)
<https://www.lightning-strike.org/about-us>

Lightning Survivor Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Lightningstrikesurvivors/>

Mt Blue Sky Incident 7/26/26:
<https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/lightning-strike-mount-blue-sky/73-a8eb63c9-2264-464f-93bf-f11a3fde2e1f>

<https://www.denverpost.com/2026/07/27/lightning-strike-mount-blue-sky/>

How to assess lightning risk when hiking Colorado's 14ers
<https://www.denverpost.com/2026/08/13/lightning-safety-14er-hiking-colorado/>

Lightning survivor says the hardest scars are the ones no one can see
https://www.winknews.com/news/lightning-survivor-says-the-hardest-scars-are-the-ones-no-one-can-see/article_f1b9d5d7-a2f3-41c0-8059-4fc7dd67499a.html

Lightning Strike Database
<https://struckbylightning.org/strike-database/>

Teen using computer shocked by electrical current after lightning strikes house 7/7/26
<https://abcnews.com/US/child-computer-shocked-electrical-current-after-lightning-strikes/story?id=134594109>

Power restored to Colorado's Vail Valley after lightning strike
<https://www.denverpost.com/2026/07/07/vail-valley-power-outage/>

2023-06-16 Telluride Bluegrass Festival Lightning
<https://savingcountrymusic.com/the-telluride-bluegrass-festival-turns-50-report-photos/>
