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Family loses all in house fire

ST. PAUL—A St. Pauls family has suffered the second of two housefires in a two-year period. "We lost everything this time," said Ms. Melinda Johnson. "We have nothing left."

A fire began at the home on Ross Street that Ms. Johnson shared with Vander Harding and their five small sons around 3 p.m., apparently in the front bedroom of the house. When the St. Pauls Volunteer Fire Department and the Big Marsh Volunteer Fire Department arrived, the two front rooms were engulfed and flames were shooting from the windows.

"Units responded quickly, and were praised for their professionalism," said SPVFD Chief Richard Fisher, "but the house was ablaze."

The house was owned by Joseph E. St. Romain, who had spent "over \$6,000 plus labor" completely remodeling it. Mr. St. Romain had spent nine months renovating the house. "I finished it in May, and they moved in. I had not bought fire insurance—I was going to do it with this month's rent," he said.

Ms. Johnson, still emotional, said "we had a fire almost two years ago, and it was bad, but we salvaged some things. We gradually built our belongings back up. And then it happened . . . I guess we'll find another place and start all over. Again."

Some assistance has come in. "Some donations have come from individuals. People have been real kind and they've helped as much as they could. We really thank them," she said.

The couple, with five sons, ages 5, 4, 3, 2, and 5 months, have been staying "place to place, mainly with relatives since the fire," Ms. Johnson said.

The family was at home at the time of the fire. Mr. Harding was cutting grass, and Ms. Johnson was doing laundry. The children first noticed the fire, the cause of which is still under investigation, and hollered to their parents. Ms. Johnson rushed in and grabbed up the infant and ran outdoors. Mr. Harding came in and tried to put the fire out and throw out a burning mattress but was unsuccessful.



Robert E. Hocutt Jr. and Tammie Lezon of the Moyock Fire Department were reportedly the first couple in Currituck County to be married in the Moyock fire station. The firefighters are natives of Currituck. Hocutt's father, Robert E. Hocutt Sr. who is the station's fire chief, was the best man. Staff photo by: James Kharouf

Wedding Bells And Fire Sirens

By James Kharouf
Elizabeth City Advance
Staff Writer

ELIZABETH CITY—Tammie Lezon must of thought of the old song, 'I love a man in uniform,' when she agreed to get married in fire department apparel recently at the Moyock Fire Department.

Robert E. Hocutt Jr., 25, and Tammie Lezon, 26, made history as the first couple to be married in the Moyock Fire Station, Currituck County.

The couple, both members of the squad, put aside the traditional wedding attire for the uniforms both wear when on duty. The brief ceremony inside the station had some nuptial flourishes ac-

cented by bright firefighting equipment outside.

The wedding adds another hocutt to Moyock' firefighting family.

The bride is a firefighter EMT and ambulance sergeant who has been with the department for two and a half years. Robert has been with the department for seven years.

Hocutt's father and best man, Robert Sr., is the Moyock fire chief. His mother, Betty Jean Hocutt, is a member of the Moyock Volunteer Fire Department ladies auxiliary. Hocutt's sister, Tammy Hocutt is also a member of the department.

Both graduated from Currituck High School but didn't meet until over two years ago.

Firefighter's Family Needs Assistance

Donations are being requested to assist a fellow firefighter's family in need of financial support. Recently, eight-year-old Andrew Johnson, successfully underwent liver transplant surgery at St. Christopher's Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Andrew is the son of Fire Captain and Mrs. Larry Johnson of the Pensacola Naval Air Station Fire Department in Pensacola, Florida.

Expenses for the trans-

plant procedures are far in excess of insurance coverage, necessitates this request. Donations should be sent to:

Andrew Johnson Transplant Fund, Citizens & Builders Federal Savings Bank, P.O. Box 12486, Pensacola, FL 32573.

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Submitted by:
Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc.

Tammie's grandfather, George Griffin, gave the bride away. Her bride's maid was Barbera Martinez of Virginia Beach.

Selma firefighter contain ammonia leak

No injuries were reported recently following an ammonia leak at Selma Ice and Coal company on North Webb Street.

A line that mixes water and ammonia in the ice-making process burst, said Joe Moore, assistant chief of Selma's Fire Department.

Firemen, who were called to the scene at 8:40 a.m., had the leak under control within an hour, Mr. Moore said.

Firemen pulled the ammonia out of the plant with the use of fans, he explained. Water was then sprayed on the ammonia fog, causing it to disintegrate, Mr. Moore added.



McGruff, The Crime Dog

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME

Fire Loss Estimated At Two Million

By Jeff Melton
Record Staff Writer

HICKORY—Firefighters battled a four-alarm blaze into the early morning hours recently at a downtown knitting plant before finally bringing it under control around 1 a.m.

Fire officials estimated \$2 million in damage was sustained by Patricia Knitting Co., 71 Third St., SE. Most of the damage appeared to be structural, but a large amount of material inside the plant also was damaged.

The management of the plant announced a meeting would be held sometime with employees to determine the course of action for the immediate future. The decision on whether the plant will continue its operations will affect 75 employees.

Around 6 p.m. the Hickory Fire Department, along with Fairbrook, Viewmont and Highlands, plus volunteers from Long View, were called to the scene. At the time of their arrival, however, fire had already ignited a warehouse area on the west side of the building.

Hickory Assistant Chief Fred Hollar organized his personnel on two sides of the plant, hoping to contain the blaze to the warehouse area, which was reportedly packed with various kinds of materials, including carpet.

By 7:15 p.m., fire protruded from the roof of the area. A ladder company fought to quell the flames, but their efforts were only temporary, as a light summer breeze shifted directions, reigniting the fire and causing it to spread to the south side of the building.

Meanwhile, pumper and tanker battalions on the ground aimed their fire hoses toward the west wall of the plant, which had begun to buckle from the intense heat. But, around 7:30 p.m., part of the wall collapsed, giving new life to the inferno inside.

Firefighters who had once been inside the warehouse were forced to back up and take up new positions on the ground. One of hickory's tankers apparently overheated for a few minutes, causing a delay in firefighting efforts.

The skies above were filled with the black, sooty smoke, which could be seen as far away as Valdese and Granite Falls.



New Car For Warsaw Fire Department

Fire Chief Cecil Guy is enjoying a new car for the fire department, as the Warsaw Town Board voted to donate a used police car to the department. According to Guy, the car was given to the department in exchange for a brush truck. Photo by: Kim Lloyd

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We reserve the right to edit any material submitted to us. Please note that when submitting a newspaper clipping we need to know the name of the newspaper, the town it is located in and the date of the article. We also need to know who wrote it if it has a byline. If you submit original photographs, please make a note on the back of each photo if you want them returned.

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"Hazardous Materials Response Issues" Teleconference

Responding to Hazardous Materials incidents is the subject of a teleconference scheduled for November 1, 1989 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (EST). The teleconference, titled "Hazardous Materials Response Issues", will feature discussions on U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (O.S.H.A.) Regulation 29CFR 1910.120; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) Regulation, "Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response"; National Fire Protection Association (N.F.P.A.) Standard #471, "Recommended Practice for Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents"; and N.F.P.A. Standard #472, "Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents".

Sponsor of the teleconference is Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services, Inc. (VFIS) headquartered in York, Pennsylvania. VFIS officials said the presentation will include both pre-taped segments and live panel discussions. An important feature will be a question and answer period using a call-in system.

"This will be a very timely production as the O.S.H.A. Final Rule becomes effective on March 6, 1990 and affects *All Emergency Response Services*," according to Raymond Hawkins, Special Projects Coordinator for VFIS. "Experts and specialists in the area of HazMat will be

featured panelists," he said. Participants, Hawkins announced, will include Congressman Curt Weldon, Chairman of the Congressional Fire Service Caucus; Daniel McNeil, President of VFIS; Tom Seymour, of U.S. O.S.H.A.; Rod Turpin, of U.S. E.P.A.; Greg Noll, Prince George's County, Maryland, Bureau of Fire and Rescue; William Stringfield, St. Petersburg, Florida Fire Department; and Mike Hildebrand, President of HazMat Training Information and Services, Inc., among others.

Louis Klein, Vice President for Client Support Services for VFIS, said the tele-

conference is available to anyone with a dish antenna to participate. The teleconference will be broadcast from public broadcasting station WITF of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, through the use of the Satellite Westar 5, Channel 23, 12 Cross and audio at 6.2-6.8.

For more information, interested persons may contact Tamela Monroe or Ray Hawkins at VFIS. Please phone 1 (800) 632-1884 in Pennsylvania and 1 (800) 233-1957 elsewhere.

Submitted by:
Volunteer Firemen's
Insurance Services, Inc.

First, his wife's death, now a house fire for Raleigh man

By Ned Glascock
Raleigh Times
Staff Writer

RALEIGH, N.C.—Tragedy struck Thomas B. Morris again recently.

Mr. Morris, 73, has been recovering from the shock of running over and killing his wife in their new car.

But, while trying to repair a faulty air conditioner in his 16-year-old Buick, Mr. Morris set fire to the house that he and his wife had built and remodeled over three decades. It was gutted.

"He was coming around—gradually," said Edna M. Knight, a longtime friend and next-door neighbor.

His two-story brick house, at 1003 Gardner St. off Wade Avenue, caught fire about 11:30 a.m. Firefighters thought the blaze had been extinguished, but the fire continued in the walls, attic and a number of cubby holes. It broke through the roof a short time later.

At the height of the blaze, flames as high as 20 feet shot through the roof.

The one link between his wife's tragic death and the fire was an automobile.

One June 3, Mr. Morris and his wife of 46 years, Abbie Louise Morris, were getting ready to drive their new 1989 Eagle Premier back to the dealership. It had only 106 miles on it and they wanted more instructions on how to operate it.

But as Mrs. Morris stood at the end of the driveway and watched for traffic, her husband lost control of the vehicle as he drove out of the garage. He ran over her and she died later that day.

After her death, Mr. Morris got his 1973 Buick back—the car he had traded for the Premier.

He was trying to fix a stuck knob on the air conditioner by spraying a lubricant on it, said Mrs. Knight's grandson, Charles Knight. For some reason, the car caught fire.

Mr. Morris tried to put it out with water from a basement sink, said District 1 Fire Chief J.B. Sandy.

"He couldn't get enough water to it, and it kept getting bigger and bigger," Chief Sandy said. "He said before he knew it the whole basement was on fire."

The flames spread upstairs from the basement garage, and firefighters arrived to find an "intense fire" burning in the basement and first floor, Chief Sandy said. He estimated that the fire had been burning for about 25 minutes before firefighters were called.

Lightning Blamed For Fire In Southeast Charlotte Complex

By Nancy Webb
Charlotte Observer
Staff Writer

CHARLOTTE—Fire officials say lightning caused a two-alarm fire that damaged 10 apartments at a southeast Charlotte complex recently.

No one was injured, but the fire at The Fairington Apartments at Fairview and Colony roads gutted a model apartment and damaged nine other apartments in one building.

Residents living in the apartments were put up at a motel overnight.

Betty Dollar, who lives in the building, said she heard lightning about 7:15 p.m. She didn't realize it had struck the roof of the model apartment above hers.

"Fifteen minutes later somebody came pounding on my door and said the building was on fire," Dollar said.

She grabbed her purse and ran.

Flames were shooting from the roof of the brick and

wood-frame building, she said.

It took firefighters about an hour to control the fire. Assistant Fire Chief Roger Weaver said there were no fire walls between the apartments.

"It went through the top right apartment, through the attic and burned down into the other apartments," he said.

Fire investigator Terry Lacey said six apartments were severely damaged and four moderately damaged. He estimated total damage at \$200,000.

Dollar watched from the parking lot in the drizzling rain as firefighters battled the blaze. Another resident stood nearby barefoot, hair wet and a coat pulled tight around her.

Dollar said she hoped to salvage a few things from her apartment. Photo albums came to mind first.

"They can't be replaced," she said.

Firefighters' Emergency Mobile Unit Needs Equipment

By Scott Hollifield
McDowell News
Associate Editor

MARION—Emergency officials are asking the public to help equip a mobile unit which will respond to hazardous waste spills.

The McDowell County Firemen's Association has converted a 1978 Chevrolet truck which previously hauled soft drinks into a support unit available to all the county fire departments during emergency situations, according to Brad Ledbetter, president of the firemen's association.

The unit, when properly equipped, will also help emergency workers contain dangerous chemical spills. The truck was donated to the fireman's association by Pepsi Cola.

McDowell County Emergency Management Director Carroll Hemphill said the fireman's association asked the local emergency planning committee, which gathers information on hazardous materials in the county, to help obtain equipment like shovels, saws, rakes and dozens of other items for the truck.

"We're making an appeal to the general public and to business and industry asking them to help us put this list of items together," Hemphill said, adding that the cost of all the equipment needed is estimated at \$15,000.

A subcommittee of the local emergency planning board identified businesses and industries which have the needed items, and those businesses and industries will be receiving a letter asking them to donate the items or make a monetary contribution.

Community service organizations and individuals can also make donations.

"This is a way someone who wants the environment in their county to be safer can make a contribution," Hemphill said.

The mobile response unit is stationed at the Pleasant Gardens Volunteer Fire Department because P.G. is a geographically central point in the county, and the station has the needed space to house the vehicle.

Hemphill said a mobile unit is important because hazardous material spills need quick response. The unit will respond to situations at local facilities, but emergency officials are particularly concerned with trucks and trains which transport materials through the county.

Hemphill said officials are aware of what kinds of materials are stored and used by local industries, but "what we have not been able to identify are hazardous materials on highways and on railroads."

Vehicles transporting hazardous materials often do not display the proper placards or are not labeled correctly, he said. In an accident, local firefighters are usually first on the scene. The support unit will help them evaluate and respond to the situation quickly, minimizing the danger to the environment and the public.

Some of the items needed are two round-point shovels, two pitch forks, one mattock, four pushbrooms, four stick-brooms, two rakes, a sledgehammer, a set of spark-proof hand tools, a set of jumper cables, various hammers, a skill saw and more than a hundred other items used in emergency situations.

Two men burned in chemical fire

By Sheon L. Ladson
Greensboro
News & Record
Staff Writer

GREENSBORO—Two High Point maintenance men were badly burned July 15, when the chemical sealant remover they were using to clean the floors in an office building ignited, causing a flash fire.

Earl Foster Jr. of 619 Wesley Drive in High Point sustained second- and third-degree burns over 75 percent of his body, said High Point Fire Chief L.P. Newsom. Foster was in critical condition at North Carolina Baptist hospital in Winston-Salem.

Henderson Wall, 44, of 507 Hill St. in High Point was admitted to High Point Regional Hospital with second degree burns on his face, head, left side, legs and left arm, Newsom said.

The fire started about 7:40 a.m. in a first-floor women's bathroom at the Northpoint Office Plaza at 175 Northpoint Ave. in High Point.

Suites in the building are leased to retail and business firms, a styling salon, insurance agency, recording studio and the office of the building's owner, Douglas D. Gilstrap Jr.

Wall said during an interview from his hospital room that he and Foster had just finished spreading a chemical stripping agent to remove wax buildup on the bathroom floor when the fire started.

"It all happened so quick, just 'boom' like that," he said. "I guess the fumes from it just blew up."

Wall said he pulled the door open and ran out of the bathroom, "running and hitting" to suffocate the flames burning his clothes.

"When I ran out of the bathroom, my clothes were on fire, but I guess it was just the fumes that were burning, because I could just pat my

clothes out," Wall said.

"By the time I got out the front door, I had put myself out," said Wall, who has worked as a maintenance man in the building for three years.

Foster was standing inside the bathroom out of reach of the door, so he had to run through the flames to get out of the bathroom, Wall said.

"When he came running out, his clothes were burned off."

Wall said he and Foster already had stripped the floors in upstairs rooms of the building and hadn't had any problems with the sealant.

"I don't know what happened," he said. "Neither one of us were smoking and there weren't any machines on."

It appears fumes from the chemical remover spread over the bathroom floor and ignited the wallpaper, Newsom said. The flash fire apparently was the result of poor ventilation and improper use of the remover, he said.

Gilstrap said the majority of the fire damage was in the bathroom and his office, located over the bathroom. Smoke damage to the building is extensive, since soot went to the air-conditioning ducts and spread to all the rooms in the building, he said.

Damage will run into the tens of thousands of dollars, Gilstrap estimated, since some of the central air-conditioning system will have to be replaced.

Cleaning crews began tackling the smoke and soot-stained rooms.

"We're pulling out all the stops to get the suites back operational," Gilstrap said, adding that total cleanup could take weeks.

Newsom, the fire chief, said investigators took the floor buffer apart to determine if an errant spark caused the fire, but that possibility has been ruled out. A

full report must wait until they can question both men, he said.

"That's the worst I've ever seen anybody burned," Newsom said of Foster's injuries.

Simpson Chief Is Fireman of Year

GREENVILLE, N.C.—Johnnie Glenn Mayo, chief of the Simpson Rural Fire Department, was honored recently by the Pitt County Fireman's Association as the Pitt Fireman of the Year.

Mayo, a Greene County native, has been a Simpson resident for 19 years, a member of the fire department most of those years and chief for two years. He is employed by Watson Electrical Contracting Co. of Greenville.

It was noted during the presentation that Mayo has been instrumental in his department's obtaining a state grant to develop a compressor and cascade system that can be used by his unit and other departments. He has been working on upgrading the department so residents of the fire district can qualify for less expensive fire insurance and has been an advocate of joint training for his department and others in the county.

Mayo and his wife, Donna Porter Mayo, have two sons, Tracey and Kevin.

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City renews fire services to the county

By Charles White
Elizabeth City Advance
Staff Writer

ELIZABETH CITY—City and county officials have worked out a plan to continue fire protection by the Elizabeth City Fire Department for the extra-territorial zone that wraps around the city's corporate limits.

City fire protection had been jeopardized by a disagreement between Pasquotank County and Elizabeth City. The impasse occurred over the amount of money budgeted by the county for the city service.

City officials felt the amount should have been higher, and hinted at pulling their protection out of the zone. Such an action could have placed a strain on the county's volunteer departments to protect the area. Also, the action would have affected the county's overall fire insurance rating, city officials said.

During a recent meeting of the City-County Joint Long-Range Planning Committee, county officials agreed to provide an additional \$3,000

per month allocation. Those funds will cover the cost of dispatching, beginning in January 1990, and continuing until the 911 emergency call system goes into operation. This additional allocation would begin in January if the emergency system is not in operation.

County Manager Randy Keaton said this would provide the city with almost the same amount as allocated in 1988-89 if the monthly fee were continued through the end of the current fiscal year.

City Manager Marvin Davis said the city's representatives accepted the proposal with the good faith understanding that the county would be open for future negotiations.

The issue of fire protection for the two-mile band around the city's limits emerged during county budget deliberations in June. At that time commissioners proposed a fire protection appropriation of \$103,860 by figuring that it cost the county \$4.77 per person to provide fire protection. That amount was multiplied by the number of residents in the city and those residing in the extra-territorial zone. An additional \$18,000 was added to cover the cost of dispatching.

Zack Robertson, Elizabeth City city councilman, appeared before the commissioners in response to the proposal. Robertson asked for an additional \$46,000. At the time, he told the commissioners that their proposed appropriation was not sufficient.

Calling the extra-territorial zone an industrial corridor, Robertson said, "This is where the money is; not people. It's dollars and cents that you are talking about here."

He added that the investment in the zone, valued at \$51.8 million based on 1982 figures, represented a need for heavy fire equipment,

people who are well-trained and a quick response time.

"We ask you to consider the fire department and the city's request," he told the commissioners. "You might not realize what you are getting for your money."

Robertson, referring to the \$4.77 per person figure, said that amount was sufficient only for a volunteer force. The city, he said, has a full-time force which costs approximately \$50 per person for fire protection.

"We can't do it for \$4.77," Robertson said.

Robertson's plea had little effect on the commissioners, who approved their budget as prepared. The city responded by discussing withdrawal of fire protection from the two-mile area around the city.

Council member James Harrington, who agreed with Robertson, said the county was not being fair. "They're getting quite a deal out of us."

Although nothing was done to withdraw protection of the two-mile zone, it has continued to be a source of discussion with the most recent installment occurring during July's council meeting.

Davis, in material prepared for Mayor Melvin Daniels and the city council, said the method used by the county to establish the amount of the allocation was inappropriate for two reasons. The first dealt with an incorrect emphasis when determining the value of the area covered. The second was an invalid comparison of equipment and personnel between the city's fire department and the county's volunteer departments.

After much discussion it was finally determined by local officials that it was time to talk about this issue through the joint long-range planning committee.

Asheboro woman blazes trail for females

By Bobby Burns
Courier-Tribune
Staff Writer

ASHEBORO—On October 3, 1988, Asheboro Fire Department officials did something nobody had done there before—they hired a female firefighter.

That woman was Kathy Bailey.

Realizing her trail-blazing position, Bailey is rising to the occasion.

"I feel good because I am the first woman firefighter in the city of Asheboro," she said. "I feel good because I am making history."

"But I also feel I've got something to prove. If I don't make it, then it may be harder on the other women that come behind me."

The 26-year-old Bailey said she has dedicated herself to being successful in her firefighting capacity. That way, she can help guarantee that other women are not discriminated against, she said.

"If I fail and another woman applies after me, they might not accept her because they will say, 'Well, we already tried a woman and it didn't work out.'"

Bailey also said she hopes to use her current job as the first of many steps in an emergency services career, perhaps one day because a fire marshal or an investigator, opening up more doors for women.

Judging from her performance so far, Bailey seems to be well on her way to accomplishing her goals.

"She has done very well," said Asheboro Chief Jim Smith. "We have had no problems with Kathy's performance as a firefighter or generally in carrying out her day-to-day duties or in her training."

Smith said Bailey works hard and has exceptional in-

terpersonal skills: "She has a very outgoing personality and is a very easy person to like. With that, she has gained the respect of people throughout the department."

Bailey graduated from Greensboro's North Carolina A&T in 1984 with a degree in health and physical education. While in school, she joined Army R.O.T.C. and attended military training at Fort Bragg. She also was a trainer for A&T's men's football team.

She's been a secretary, a photographer and has managed a shoe store.

Smith said Bailey's experience and good physical condition all were factors contributing to her hiring. "But what impressed us was her enthusiasm and quick wit. She showed you right off the bat that she loves a challenge."

As a woman who has become a devoted "non-office" person, Bailey said she is very happy with what she is doing and has trained herself to deal with the job's obvious drawback—the sometime life-threatening duty.

"I know psychologically what I'm going to do," she said. "I know that every time a call comes in, I may have to put my life on the line. I accepted that months ago."

"You know there is a job to do, so you just don't think about the danger and you do it."

Bailey doesn't mind the 24-hour shifts three days every week and her husband and four-year-old son support her 100 percent.

And, she said she gets along with men at the station just fine.

"I told (the men) not to change and they respect me. And when they talk their guy talk, I'll 'ha-ha-ha' along with them."

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Nash fire inspector keeps busy

By Chris Johnson
Graphic
Staff Writer

NASHVILLE—Nash County Fire Inspector James Mercer recently inspected all the county's schools, and supplied the reports to School Superintendent Cecil Stroud last week.

Mercer, a former Rocky Mount firefighter who has been in his current position in Nashville for two years, told *The Graphic* that he does quarterly inspections of all schools in the county, both public and private. Day care facilities, nursing homes, and foster homes are inspected annually to insure that there are no violations or fire hazards on their premises.

All county buildings and property undergo a fire and safety inspection semi-annually, he said.

The clean-cut, uniformed 33-year-old told the newspaper that the most common violations he finds are "poor housekeeping and portable electric heaters."

"The overuse of extension cords is another problem," he said.

When major appliances are plugged into a "shoe-string" extension cord (the kind most people use) "the cord overheats and causes a spark or an arc and starts a fire," he said.

Mercer said these extension cords are "temporary wiring for temporary use" and warned that they should never be run under a rug or through a doorway where the door closes on the wire.

"That will crack the paper insulation between the wires in the cord and when the parallel wires are overheated they could touch each other, setting off an arc (which looks like a spark) and set a building on fire."

Mercer said heavy duty extension cords are fine for a TV, and other major appli-

ances, even for heating appliances.

According to Mercer, North Carolina currently has no statewide fire code. He said that Nash County uses the American Insurance Association's Fire Prevention Code for its standard and that Rocky Mount uses the National Fire Protection Code.

One difference Mercer noted between the two codes is that "Rocky Mount inspects all businesses at least once a year" and Nashville currently does not.

"Probably when the state adopts a fire code businesses will have to be inspected annually," he said adding that a state code is currently being discussed in the legislature.

Mercer said that he will gladly inspect a business should one invite him to do so. Even then, the business is currently not under any obligation to correct problems that Mercer may spot.

Among Mercer's other duties are providing fire education programs. He regularly visits schools and particularly likes to teach children between the ages of four and ten because "that's a very vulnerable period in their lives when they want to experiment with fire by playing with matches," he said.

Certified E.M.T.

Mercer, who is a certified E.M.T. (emergency medical technician) and a certified instructor with the N.C. Department of Community Colleges, teaches classes for industry and for public and private agencies on smoke detectors, portable fire extinguishers (which he said should be checked once a year and must be recharged after each use), and offers programs on general fire prevention and safety hazards.

He trains rookie firemen, and in the fall will teach a class at Nash Community College for the certification

of instructors to teach firemen's certification classes.

He now teaches these nine-hour certification classes, an average of one per month, at area volunteer fire departments. Firefighters need training in order to be certified as a Firefighter I, II, or III.

These certifications, Mercer said, are issued under the jurisdiction of the N.C. Fire Commission which is headed by Nash County's Director of Emergency Services, Dave Cauble.

Mercer said that during an average week he conducts approximately 25 inspections and provides an average of three public fire education programs.

He writes public safety announcements and sends them to local media for publication or broadcast.

And, said Mercer who carries a complete set of protective clothing in his car, "If I'm in the vicinity of a fire I'll respond to (fight) it."

"More than likely, I'll be called in after a fire to do a fire investigation," he added.

Mercer praised Nashville's prefire program. Firemen have previously entered businesses, learned where any hazardous materials (if any) are located and what they are, where electrical cutoff switches are located, and noted the floor plans of the buildings.

"Each (fire) truck has a complete set of these pre-fire plans," Mercer noted saying that they are of great help when there is a fire.



Landmark House At Sugar Hollow Destroyed By Fire

By Cathy McJunkin
Asheville Citizen
Staff Writer

ASHEVILLE—A fire that took more than six hours to control destroyed the landmark stone-and-frame house that had been the heart of Fairview's Sugar Hollow Farm for decades.

A 7:23 a.m. alarm sent 20 members of the Fairview Volunteer Fire Department to the home of Joe and Cynthia Kimmel at the center of the Fairview residential community known as Sugar Hollow, Fairview Fire Chief Bill McGuinn said.

No one was injured, but by the time the blaze was contained about 1:30 p.m., more than 10 tankers and 40 firefighters from Reynolds, Skyland, Garren Creek and Riceville had pitched in to try to save the well-known farmhouse off U.S. 74, McGuinn said. Swannanoa firefighters were also standing by, he said.

"We arrived and the attic was on fire inside," he said. "There were no flames visible and it was extremely difficult to get to the attic to fight the fire."

McGuinn said investigators determined that a lamp sitting on a bed on the second floor of the house had turned over, catching the sheets and bedspread on fire. The flames traveled up the wall and into the attic, he said.

Although damage estimates were incomplete, McGuinn said that smoke, fire and water damage left the house a "total loss." Several guest houses near the main house were unharmed, he said.

"The structure of the house was still standing when it was all over, but there was no roof," he said. "There were a lot of additions to the house that made firefighting difficult."

McGuinn commended fellow volunteer fire departments for their assistance at the blaze.

"It was so hot in there that a man couldn't stay in there but a few minutes at a time," he said. "That's why we're so grateful that we had enough personnel to keep switching."

McGuinn said his department received the call after Mrs. Kimmel smelled smoke and went to wake up one of her children, who saw the blaze in the attic.

Sugar Hollow Farm is the nucleus of a residential colony started in Fairview in the early 1950s by a group of Chicago-area businessmen. The area borders the hickory Nut Gap farm of U.S. Rep. James McClure Clarke.



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Firemen Becoming Certified On Volunteer Basis

By Kathy D. Chaffin
Davie County
Enterprise-Record

MOCKSVILLE—In North Carolina, you have to be certified as a law enforcement officer to become a policeman or sheriff's deputy.

"You've got to," says Davie County Fire Marshal Glen Stanley. "It's mandatory."

"To work with the Emergency Medical Service, it's mandatory that you be an EMT (emergency medical technician)," he says.

Today, even firefighters are becoming certified. But since most are volunteer, the certification is also on a volunteer basis.

Because firefighters are already donating their time, Stanley said he doubts that certification will ever be required.

"Each fire chief can make it mandatory in their own department," he said, "but as far as the state mandating it, I don't think they'll ever do that."

Three levels of certification are possible under the Firefighter Standards Manual, adopted about three years ago by the N.C. State Fire Commission.

"One (I) is the lowest," Stanley said. "That's the rookie firefighter, you might say."

It is the intermediate certi-

fication, and III is the advanced. "Those who were instructors before, they were automatically grandfathered in as Firefighters III," he said.

Presently, instructors are the only firefighters in Davie County to be certified. Seven of the 12 departments, however,—Advance, Center, Cooleemee, Cornatzer-Dulin, Fork, Jerusalem and Smith Grove—are holding classes to certify members.

Fire Destroys 60 Kayaks

By Bob Scott
Asheville Citizen
Western Bureau

ALMOND—A swift fire fueled by 600 fiberglass kayaks waiting to be shipped to new owners destroyed the headquarters of the country's second-largest producer of kayaks and sent a hazardous cloud of dense smoke rising hundreds of feet into the air.

Seventeen residents nearby were evacuated until the smoke cleared.

Vladimir Vanha, founder and owner of Noah International, placed the loss at around \$500,000. The kayaks retail for \$750 each.

The plant, which is used as a distribution center, was in the Maple Springs area on Needmore Road west of Bryson City.

The fire was reported by Randy White, a part-time employee, who was working during the lunch hour when he heard a "whoosh" and he saw fire spreading in the plant.

"Things were exploding, but it didn't sound like an explosion," he said.

White was reporting the fire when the flames burned through the telephone cables, knocking 150 telephones out of order.

When firefighters arrived around 1:15 p.m., they found

Each level of certification requires training in several subject areas. To be certified as Firefighter I, for example, a firefighter must complete training and pass tests on the training in 17 subject areas.

They are: general; forcible entry; protective breathing apparatus; emergency medical care; ropes; salvage; fire hose, nozzles and appliances; fire streams; ladders; Ventilation; inspection;

rescue; sprinklers; fire alarm and communications; safety; fire behavior; and overhaul.

"To my knowledge, there has not been anyone that has completed all 17 subject areas," Stanley said. "They're in progress, and some are very close."

Firefighters must complete training and pass tests in 18 subject areas to be certified as Firefighter II, and 12 subject areas to be certified as Firefighter III.

Because some of the same subject areas are required for all three levels, Stanley said some departments may cover all three levels at once. For example, a department may cover sprinklers on Levels I, II and III before going onto another area.

Classes must be taught by N.C. State Fire Commission instructors, of which there are several in the county. Stanley said instructors also come into the county from Iredell, Yadkin and Rowan.

"It's not unusual to have instructors crossing county lines," he said. "What that does, it gives a fire department a variety of ideas. You bring in fresh ideas from the outside."

According to the requirements for certification, plans for each class must be approved by the N.C. State Fire Commission before being held. Stanley said this is to make sure they meet the standards set in the manual.

For each subject area, for example, an instructor must show certain films and slides.

Instructors must also propose a list of objectives for firefighters to gain from the class and test them on them afterward.

"Before, to get credit for a class, all a firefighter had to do was be there," Stanley said. "Now the firefighters have to prove that they've learned something and are tested, either written or practically."

the building engulfed in flames, said Bryson City Fire Chief Monty Clampitt.

A 500-gallon propane gas tank exploded, sending metal shards through the nearby woods and into the yard of a house near the plant. Flames were shooting higher than the surrounding trees, witnesses said.

When it was determined there were hazardous chemicals involved, firefighters did not put water on the blaze, a standard precaution.

Firefighters, Swain County EMTs and deputies evacuated 17 residents and closed Needmore Road for more than three hours.

There were no injuries, reported Sgt. Jim Taylor of the sheriff's department.

Officials from the regional and local offices of Emergency Management were notified and traveled to the scene, as did chemical experts.

Telephone calls were made to CHEMTREC, an organization that advises firefighters how to fight chemical fires.

Most of the chemicals were in the acetone, rosin and copper naphthants families.

Authorities said the chemicals would not have been fatal, but could have caused severe respiratory and eye irritations.

Once the testing is complete, Stanley said the instructor must funnel the objectives and test results through Davidson County Community College. The college, in turn, passes them onto the area coordinator for the N.C. State Fire Commission.

"If all these steps aren't followed properly, the firefighter does not receive credit for certification," he said.

Once they meet the requirements for certification, firefighters are given a certificate and a cloth patch with their level of certification on it. "It's a lot of hours and a lot of work," Stanley said, "and they deserve a lot of credit."

The major advantage to certification is that firefighters will perform better on the scene. The benefit to county residents will be better fire protection.

Another advantage, Stanley said, is that fire training will be consistent throughout the state. "So if you're a Firefighter I in Davie County, you'll be a Firefighter I in any county," he said. "Now, if a firefighter comes in from another county, you don't know what he knows."

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Fire destroys 40-year-old business

WILMINGTON — A Wilmington radiator repair shop that had been in business for 40 years was gutted by fire recently.

Someone reported a fire at the Miller and Talent Radiator Service, at 18th and Castle streets, around 4:45 a.m., said Lt. Harold Brown of the Wilmington Fire Department.

The blaze appeared to have started in the main work area of the wood-frame, tin-roof building, Brown said. He said the fire spread from there to the attic. Although investigators have not yet determined the cause, arson has been ruled out.

About 15 firefighters spent about 30 minutes getting the blaze under control, Brown said. "It's possible that it could have been burning for a good period of time before we got the call," the firefighter said.

Talent said the business had no fire insurance. The equipment loss was estimated at between \$50,000 and \$75,000, but firefighters did not provide a damage estimate for the building.

"It was a terrible shock," Talent said, adding that he didn't know what he would do next. "... To start out new again would cost so much."

The business started as the Miller and Shepard repair shop. In 1952, the name changed to Miller and Talent when Talent's father joined the business. The younger Talent became involved in the repair shop in 1970, he said.

The building is owned by Nancy Marks, of Wilmington, Talent said.

Fire investigators said they would return to the charred building to continue their probe.

"It's a long time to be in something and not know what happened," Talent said.

Durham firefighters to reach new heights

By Paul Bonner
Sun Staff Writer

DURHAM—Durham firefighters will be reaching for new heights as the department's latest addition to its fire-truck fleet goes into service.

It's a Grumman Aerial Cat truck, big and loaded with special features.

The new truck's ladder extends to 102 feet, said Assistant Fire Chief C. Ray Taylor—15 feet higher than the other aerial trucks now in service.

"It's top of the line," Taylor said.

The truck was delivered July 6, but the city is awaiting delivery of some hand tools and equipment in the contract before paying the price tag of about \$477,000 and dispatching the truck on calls, said Fire Chief Nathaniel Thompson.

Meanwhile, the aerial truck sits in Fire Station No. 1 downtown, where it clears the top of the station garage door by about 6 inches.

"This is part of meeting the growth of the city. It will enhance our response capabilities all over town," Thompson said.

The new truck replaces the department's aging Snorkel truck as the primary ladder truck.

Just as important, however, it allows more effective coverage of the entire city with elevated-platform trucks, Thompson said. Now there are four, including the Snorkel.

No longer are tall buildings confined to downtown, where they can be protected by a single elevated-platform truck, Thompson noted.

"There are condominiums, office buildings and (other multistory buildings) now in every part of the city, so the response requires a ladder and we're just trying to keep up with the times," he said.

The Snorkel truck differs from the aerial trucks in that

it has a boom with a middle "elbow joint" instead of a telescoping tower.

The 17-year-old truck soon will undergo extensive refurbishing in Roanoke, Va. Then it will be kept in reserve at Station 1 until the planned Station 11 on Cornwallis Road near Ridge Road is built. There it will serve its few remaining years before retirement, Taylor said.

Of the two other aerial trucks in operation, one is at the new Station 12 on Carpenter Fletcher Road near Meridian Business Park and the other is at Station 2 on Ninth Street.

The new aerial truck is red, reflecting a departmental decision to abandon the lime-yellow color adopted several years ago for a return to the traditional color.

Thompson said matching the yellow sometimes has been a problem, because the hue never has been made standard among fire-equipment manufacturers.

Red is considered less visible in low light than yellow-green, but that should be no problem with the wide, Scotchlite reflective strip around the new truck's middle, fire officials said. The strip will be a feature on future new trucks.

"It will stand out like a sore thumb," said Administrative Capt. John Krokowski.

Like those of most cities, Durham fire officials do not expect to be able to reach to the top of every building in the city with the elevated-platform trucks.

"Any of the biggies (cities) you want to take, most of their aerial apparatus is 85 to 100 feet," Krokowski said.

Durham has buildings much taller than that and occupants must rely on sprinkler systems, internal fire hoses and fire-escape routes for safety.

Only recently has technology overcome problems with trucks with taller booms, although aerial trucks reach-

ing between 100 and 200 feet have become relatively common in Europe, Krokowski said.

Chief drawbacks to the new aerial ladder trucks are high cost and low maneuverability—some can't negotiate narrow streets—plus the tremendous pumping pressure required to push a high-pressure stream of water that many feet up.

Besides that, trucks such as the "Bronto-Lift" line manufactured by a Finnish company, don't incorporate a water tank or pumping equipment on the truck chassis, Thompson said.

The department put two years into planning, drawing up specifications and overseeing custom construction of the truck at the Roanoke, Va., factory of Grumman Emergency Products, a division of Grumman Corporation.

The body is all-aluminum, a big advantage in longevity, since steel-bodied fire trucks start breeding rust after several years.

It pumps water at 2,000 gallons a minute—a third faster than the department's other aerial trucks.

It's also the department's first air-conditioned fire truck. The air conditioning is a necessity, not a luxury, in the enclosed crew cab behind the driver's cab, Krokowski said.

"In the rear jump seats, where the motor is, it can get pretty hot," he said.

National Fire Protection Association safety standards now call for the enclosed areas for crew members, something all future Durham fire trucks will have.

Other safety features include a "Rear Guard" sonar that warns the driver when objects are close behind the truck as it backs up.

Another is a detector that warns platform operators when the tower is near high-voltage lines—every aerial

crew member's worst nightmare.

The electrical-line detector could prove a lifesaver, especially in the dark, Taylor said. "Not matter how careful you are, you just can't see them," Taylor said.

The pump operator, who works at controls on the truck's side, provides an electrical path to ground and so is the crew member most liable to be electrocuted should the tower snag a wire.

The truck's manufacturers according provided a slide-out platform under the pump controls. Thompson said the platform also helps the operator view gauges near the top of the truck's lofty side.

The truck also has yet another safety feature Krokowski said is going to be made standard in future fire-truck purchases: powerful quartz lighting mounted on the truck and on portable stands to illuminate the fire scene.

"It's something we have sorely needed," Krokowski said. "The fire ground is something that's been neglected over the years."

Another advantage of the new aerial truck is that it has a ladder to the platform. Firefighters were unable to climb to and from the extended platform of the Snorkel truck. Although it is possible to climb the aluminum skeleton of the older aerial trucks' towers, they lack rungs.

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One building burns, but firemen save others

By Jeanette White
Bertie Ledger-Advance
News Editor

WINDSOR—What could have been a major disaster for the Town of Windsor was averted recently when a fire in the business district was contained to one building.

The fire was discovered about 7 a.m. when Spencer Pierce of Windsor came to King Street to buy a newspaper. An unidentified man ran toward Mr. Pierce and said smoke was coming from the Heckstall Building.

Mr. Pierce ran across the street to Dispatcher Betty Constable at the Sheriff's Department and reported the fire.

When firemen arrived, Assistant Fire Chief John Ed Whitehurst said the attic crawl space of the building

was in flames when doors were opened.

Heavy smoke was pouring from any cracks in the building, windows and the roof. A thick plate-glass door at the front of the building had cracked from the heat.

The Heckstall Building has a long hallway that runs straight from the front to the rear door, with offices along one side. The doors to all offices had been closed and secured for the night, as well as the front and rear doors.

Assistant Chief Whitehurst said that the closed doors hampered air circulation and prevented the spread of flames inside the structure, which is owned by James F. Hoggard, III, Tommy Davis and Joe Mizelle, all of whom had offices in the building. The North Carolina Department of Revenue, staffed by Alex Lynch, also rented space in the building.

The fire started from a ballast in a fluorescent light fixture in the hall. It is estimated that the fire had been smoldering two or three hours before the smoke was discovered.

"But she was getting ready

to really go," the assistant chief said.

He said the fire was oxygen-starved and had begun to come into any wall crack that would provide more oxygen. Smoke and heat were at a two-foot level when firemen arrived.

"Our big concern was trying to keep the fire from spreading," Mr. Whitehurst said.

King Street was closed to traffic. Askewville and Merry Hill-Midway Fire Departments were called for assistance and a staging area was established on a nearby parking lot. Windsor Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary arrived at the scene and began dispensing Gatorade, water and doughnuts.

About 45 firemen were at the scene, some inside the Heckstall Building and others manning a pumping station at the rear. Other firemen stood by to protect surrounding structures, if necessary. Equipment at the site or on stand-by included four fire trucks and the equipment vans.

The Ledger Office Supply and Bertie Ledger-Advance are located in the adjacent

building. When Editor/Publisher Laura Harrell and employee Mary Beth Hill arrived at the scene, Mrs. Hill said she could not see inside the building because of smoke. Damage in The Ledger building has not been determined, but some cracks caused by the heat are visible and structural damage is being assessed.

Wooden blinds on the second floor of the building were broken and a window was raised to purge the building of smoke. Then large fans were used to pull smoke from the first floor.

Assistant Chief Whitehurst said the Windsor Fire Department has floor plans of all stores in the business district. If the flames had spread to The Ledger building, firemen were ready to man a barricade at the fire-wall between it and the adjacent Municipal Building, which houses town offices.

The offices in the Heckstall Building lost no client records to fire, but computer systems in the building were damaged.

Tommy Davis said that it would be about two months before renovations are completed on the Heckstall Building. Total amount of damage has not been determined, but the interior is a total loss.

Until the renovations are completed, Mr. Davis and Mr. Hoggard's insurance offices are housed in the old Vocational Rehabilitation Office across the street between the Courthouse and Walker Furniture Company.

Mr. Mizelle has moved his accounting firm to Sutton Drive and the Department of Revenue office has moved to Williamston permanently.

Fire Guts Standard Grocery

By Paul Dillon
Mount Airy News
Staff Writer

MOUNT AIRY—Flames gutted a North Main Street grocery, completely destroying the building and its contents, authorities said.

The fire started in the back storage room and basement of Standard Grocery Co., located at 1810 N. Main St., Mount Airy Fire Chief Bill Joe Woodruff reported.

Fire officials received the call at 4:30 p.m., after a customer saw smoke outside the building and notified the grocery's owner and operator, Edwin "Eddie" M. Woltz of Mount Airy.

Woltz and a cashier were in the structure when the fire began, the fire chief reported.

No one was injured in the incident and the cause of the fire is still undetermined by authorities. Woodruff said that lightning from an electrical storm may have led to the blaze, but a conclusive origin of the fire hasn't been found.

The fire traveled from the back storage room to a concealed space in the building between the ceiling and the roof, Woodruff related. The blaze swept through the space for the entire length of the building, he added.

Standard Grocery Co. was located in the cinder block and wooden structure previously occupied by Country Club Grocery. The business was recently remodeled by its owner.

An cost estimate of damage to the grocery was unavailable.

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