

FARMER & MINER

Volume 85

Issue 11

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Smoldering fireworks sparked house fire

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Home blaze important reminder about firework safety

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FREDERICK - Last week's Fourth of July proved to be an unfortunate lesson in fire safety for one neighborhood in Frederick after a late night fire destroyed one home and caused extensive damage to another.

After residents in the 4000 block Wren Court enjoyed a fireworks display in their cul-de-sac, they disposed of the used fireworks in a trash can on the side of their house.

According to Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District Division Chief Tim Zimmerman, it is likely that hot embers from the used fireworks re-ignited

after rubbing against the contents of the trash can.

"They were not completely extinguished prior to being put in the trash can," said Zimmerman.

As the fire worked up the outside walls and into the attic, the heat spread next door.

As luck would have it, off-duty Firestone Police Sgt. Neal Lucero was driving home shortly before midnight and saw the fire. Approximately nine apparatus and 28 firefighters were there to quell the structure fire.

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Fire investigators say improperly disposed of fireworks sparked a large fire that destroyed two homes in Frederick.

Photo: Provesa

FIRE

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Before they arrived, Lucero, with the help of neighbors, evacuated five people from the two homes, along with a few pets. According to Zimmerman, the residents of the two homes weren't aware that their houses were on fire. Zimmerman said that is typical if the fire is on the outside of the house or in the attic, when smoke is above where the fire alarms are located.

Firefighters determined that the first fire was too far along. They couldn't fight the flames inside so they moved towards a defensive approach, working to extinguish flames on both houses from the outside. The fire was considered under control at 1:30 a.m.

Zimmerman said crews were on the scene until 10 p.m. the next night. Many firefighters had already spent that day at Firestone's Fourth of July event.

The Weld County Victim Advocates is assisting the residents of the two homes.

Zimmerman said their insurance companies are ready to jump in and do mitigation work. A restoration company began collecting whatever was salvageable at the neighboring house.

"It's sad to see people lose

their houses, but houses can be replaced," said Zimmerman. "People need to handle fireworks safely and dispose of them properly."

He was happy that no injuries to residents, firefighters or animals throughout the long night.

Zimmerman noted that the fireworks obtained from the house were legal fireworks - they did not leave the ground.

To safely dispose of fireworks, his advice is to soak fireworks in a fireproof container filled with water.

Zimmerman noted that the fire department regularly works with area police departments.

"Police officers have more training than you think," he said. "Whether you're a firefighter helping with police activity, we all work together everyday."

According to Firestone Police Chief David Montgomery, "We have not trained with 'fire personnel' in the sense of entering into burning structures. Officers will rely on their police training, instinct and most certainly common sense, when dealing with this type of situation."

For more information on last week's fire, contact the Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District at 303-833-2742 or visit www.ffid.us.