

House fire remains under investigation

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Strong winds contributed to blaze that quickly destroyed Town of Grafton residence

Authorities are continuing to investigate a wind-driven fire that destroyed a two-story home in the Town of Grafton last week.

Firefighters from eight area departments and other emergency crews responded to the blaze, which engulfed a residence at 437 Lake Bluff La. the morning of June 1.

Although crews arrived within minutes after receiving a 911 call shortly before 10 a.m., the building was already filled with flames and smoke, said Grafton Assistant Fire Chief Dean Proefrock.

Proefrock, one of the first firefighters at the scene, said officials quickly determined that no one was inside the residence, which is owned by Dave and Sandra Davis. The owners were both at work and their daughter was at school, he said.

“When I arrived, it was obvious that we would not be able to save the house. The fire had already spread through the floors and roof,” he said.

Firefighters remained at the scene for several hours, hosing down the building until the flames were extinguished. The 4,000-square-foot house and all of its contents were a complete loss, including a vehicle parked in an attached four-car garage, Proefrock said.

Three other vehicles were parked outside the residence, and two sustained minor heat damage, he said.

According to Proefrock, a motorist on Highway C was the first to call 911 after seeing flames and smoke coming from the roof of the house. A short time later, a second motorist and a neighbor rushed to the residence, pounded on locked doors and broke a window in an effort to determine if anyone was inside, he said.

Once it was learned the building was empty, firefighters focused their attention on containing the blaze.

Heat from the fire was so intense, Proefrock said, that metal I-beams and columns in the framework of the house were bent and twisted. Although the flames were fueled by 30-mph winds, there was little risk of the fire spreading to neighboring residences due to their distance from the scene, he added.

“That was one of the few blessings in this,” he said.

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The rapid devastation caused by the blaze made it impossible to determine a possible cause or origin of the fire, Proefrock said.

The Ozaukee County Sheriff's Department is investigating the fire in conjunction with state and federal officials.

Firefighters from Grafton, Port Washington, Saukville, Cedarburg, Fredonia, Mequon, Jackson and North Shore departments responded to the scene.

No emergency crew members or bystanders were injured, Proefrock said.