

Improper disposal of smoking materials sparks DRW blaze

by Cheryl McDermott

Fire officials announced Thursday that the likely cause of a fire that nearly destroyed a Deschutes River Woods mobile home early the day before was the improper disposal of smoking materials on an exterior deck that ignited combustible furniture.

Cynthia Bond and her 14-year-old son were awakened by smoke alarms shortly before 1 a.m. on January 3rd, Bend Fire Department's Deputy Fire Marshal Sue Lovisco said. They and their two pet dogs quickly evacuated the mobile home and called 911 on a cellular phone.

Two Sheriff's sergeants, Gary Cima and Chad Davis, happened to be in the area when the call came in, and arrived at 19275 Cherokee Road within five minutes of the alarm to find a 12-by-10-foot covered deck fully engulfed in flames, Deschutes County Sheriff's Lt. Shane Nelson reported.

Cima and Davis located a "frost free" water faucet and hose in the yard and were able to knock the flames down considerably prior to the arrival of firefighters, Nelson said.

Battalion Chief Bill Boos estimated \$75,000 in damage to the structure, and an additional \$10,000 to its contents. The covered deck was a total loss and the residence sustained major damage due to fire spread throughout the attic.

Lovisco credited working smoke alarms as having saved the lives of the mother and son. She reminded citizens to carefully dispose of all smoking materials in a non-combustible container with a tight fitting lid away from things that can burn.

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