

Sprinklers Save Beaverton Condos

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue firefighters credit residential sprinklers for saving a building housing six condominiums on New Years Day.

At 7:20 a.m., fire crews from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue's (TVF&R) Butner Road Station #61 responded to a report of a commercial fire alarm at 1040 SW 170th Avenue. While en route, 9-1-1 dispatchers received reports of neighbors hearing smoke alarms sounding from an upstairs condo and added additional fire crews to the response.

Upon arrival, firefighters entered the second floor townhouse condo and found smoke from ceiling to floor in the unit. They searched the condo and found that the residential sprinkler system had extinguished a fire in a third-floor upstairs bedroom.

Fire damage was confined to the bed and carpet of one bedroom, although minor smoke damage occurred throughout the two-story unit. The unit involved in the fire, and the other two first-floor condos had some water damage.

No one was at home in the fire-damaged condo at the time of the blaze, and no injuries were reported.

Firefighters and fire investigators agreed that had this building not been fitted with residential sprinklers, the fire would have likely damaged or destroyed a major portion of the six-unit building, ruining the possessions of many of the occupants. Sleeping residents in adjacent units would have been particularly vulnerable. Since no one was at home in the unit of origin, the fire would have likely built to an advanced stage without the sprinkler system. With the quick-acting sprinklers, the one sprinkler head in the room where the fire originated activated and extinguished the flames even before firefighters arrived. TVF&R fire investigators say the incident was caused when a blanket was draped over a decorative rope light that had been left on. The heat buildup ignited the blanket and a mattress. The sprinkler heads activated at about 160-degrees Fahrenheit. Damage estimate is placed at about \$20,000. Following a change to the Building Code appendix in 1999 and later adoption of that by ordinance in all jurisdictions served by TVF&R, residential fire sprinklers are

required in most multiple occupancy structures. They continue to be a valuable option for single-family residences. The cost for installation in new residential structures served by municipal water systems is usually comparable to an upgrade in carpets or cabinets in the home. The combination of working smoke alarms and residential sprinkler systems produce the highest degree of safety in a home.

For more information on residential sprinkler systems, visit www.tvfr.com or contact a residential sprinkler contractor.

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