

Juvenile cited for reckless burning

by Cheryl McDermott

One of the four suspected arson cases in Bend during the last nine days was solved when a juvenile was cited by Bend Police for reckless burning in connection with a brush fire in a vacant lot in northeast Bend on March 26, officials reported.

According to Fire Inspector Larry Medina with Bend Fire & Rescue, an unnamed juvenile is responsible for the fire near 62425 Eagle Road, a vacant lot owned by Eastmont Church. The fire began about 5:30 p.m., and consumed a 15-foot juniper tree before moving along the ground to nearby brush and trees. Fire crews extinguished the blaze before it spread to nearby homes.

Medina said the cooperation of neighborhood residents, parents, police, and fire personnel all contributed to the successful conclusion of the investigation.

Local agencies including the Deschutes County Juvenile Community Justice and local fire departments administer a 12-session "accountability curriculum" called ALERT (Accountability Leads to Empowered and Responsible Teens).

"Juveniles are often referred to the ALERT program as part of their sentencing. This case will go through the Juvenile Community Justice System and we will most likely see this individual participate," Medina said.

"The curriculum has proved itself to be an effective way to help youth understand the dangers of fire setting, the effect their fire setting had on others, and provides an avenue for additional accountability for their actions," added the inspector.

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