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Cause of fatal fire still under investigation

The cause of a residential fire that killed one man and destroyed the residence at 336 Brown Ave. is still under investigation, according to Orofino Fire Chief Mike Lee.

Two other residents in the house were able to get out. They are being cared for by family and friends.

Lee spent most of Friday on scene with the State Fire Marshall. He said that they have a pretty good idea what the cause was, but he is waiting for more results from the fire marshal. He did say the fire started in the basement and went right up the stair well into the upstairs and attic. The stairway from the main floor to the second floor was destroyed by the fire, so fire fighters were unable to access the upper area from the inside. They had to fight the fire from the outside.

Fire fighters were called to the residence just after 1 a.m. Friday morning. Two law enforcement officers from Orofino Police Department and Clearwater County Sheriff's Department were first on scene and found the structure engulfed in flames. They attempted to enter the residence, but could not due to heavy smoke and flames, according to their news release.

Lee said that they were advised of the victim in the basement and attempted to reach him, but were unable to do so because the fire in that area was so hot. With the heavy smoke already there, they were confident that it would be a recovery rather than rescue operation, he said. Fire fighters were able to recover the body later. The victim has not been officially identified.

Shortly after arriving, Lee called a second alarm and Sunnyside Rural Fire Department personnel responded to assist the Orofino department.

The configuration of the residence and the fire burning the stairs to the second floor made fighting the fire a challenge since they could only reach it from outside. The stairs to the basement were not burned. There was minimal fire damage to the main floor of the house. Ventilation of the structure was also a challenge due to the configuration.

One fire fighter had a minor injury. She was treated and released from the hospital. Clearwater County Ambulance Service was on stand by at the scene.

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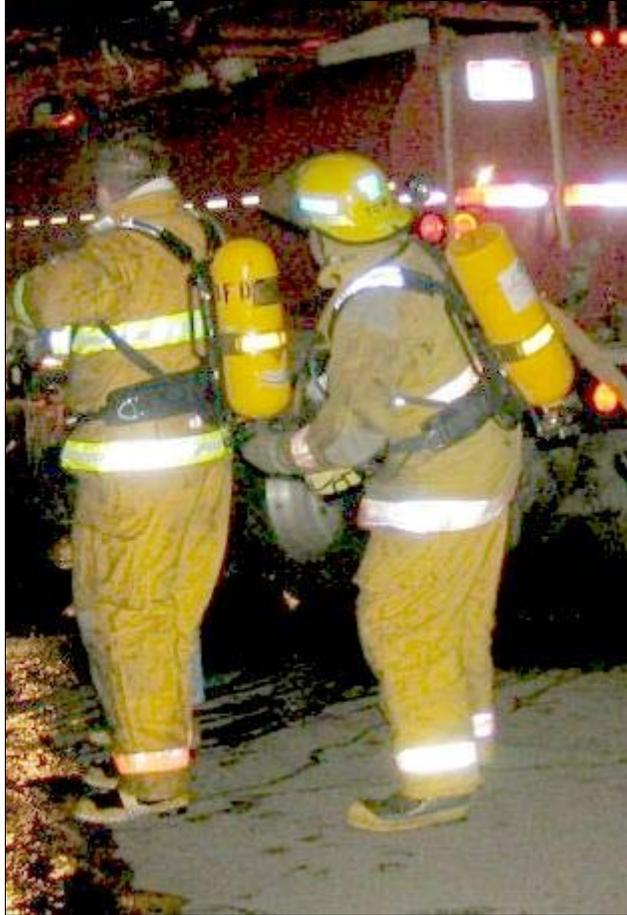


This residence at the corner of Brown and B St. was destroyed by fire early Friday morning. The cause is still under investigation.



Fire fighters shot water through a back window of the home as materials in the second floor and

attic burned. They were unable to gain access from the inside because the stairs to the second floor burned.



One fire fighters assists another to change the air bottle on his self-contained breathing apparatus. (SCBA)



Fire fighters put water through the front window into where flames are burning in the attic.



Flames engulf the roof of the residence.



A fire fighter uses the water cannon on this engine to reach the flames on the roof.



Fire fighters climb on the porch roof to gain better access to the fire in the second floor of the house.

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