



Palatine Fire Department

Incident Press Release

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2009

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Simultaneous Fires Demonstrate Value of Automatic Aid Agreements

Two structure fires in Palatine that were called in within minutes of each other late at night on April 8, 2009 showed the value of pre-arranged automatic aid agreements and a central dispatch system. At 11:32 p.m. on April 8 a call was received reporting smoke in the building at 888 S. Plum Grove Road. Initially-arriving units found a smell of smoke and a light haze inside the 3-story, 12-unit condo building. At 11:37 p.m., as additional units were still en route to the Plum Grove Rd. call, a second call came in reporting smoke and fire coming from an apartment at 1184 E. Nichols Rd., in the Village of the Sun complex. As part of an automatic aid agreement, an engine from the Long Grove Fire District responded to this call along with Palatine units on the initial dispatch. As Palatine's rescue squad was committed to the Plum Grove Rd. incident, a squad from the Arlington Heights Fire Department also was dispatched to the Nichols Rd. call. First arriving units on Nichols, at 11:44 p.m., were confronted with heavy smoke and a report of a person possibly trapped in the first-floor unit where the fire originated. A 2 ½" hose line was pulled into the building to support the simultaneous search and rescue efforts; no victims were found in the building after a thorough search.

The fire at the Plum Grove Road location was determined to be burning inside a wall in unit 115 of the attached 900 S. Plum Grove Rd. The walls and ceiling were opened in that area and the fire extinguished with no further extension. The fire was declared under control at 12:30 a.m. An investigation by Palatine Fire Department investigators revealed that the fire had been smoldering inside the wall for some time, and the initial cause was believed to be heat from a plumber's torch due to work done in the unit earlier in the day. Two units were left untenable due to damage to the common wall, and damage was initially estimated at \$5,000. Ten firefighters staffing one engine, one ladder truck, one rescue squad and one ambulance and two command officers were on the scene at this incident.

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The fire on Nichols was found to have been mostly extinguished by a neighbor using a portable fire extinguisher through a sliding glass door that he broke out. Firefighters opened the ceiling and walls to check for extension; none was found. This fire was declared under control at 12:01 a.m. The fire was confined to one room, but heavy smoke damage occurred throughout the unit rendering it uninhabitable. Other residents of the building were allowed to return to their apartments. Initial damage estimate is \$20,000 to the structure and contents. 18 firefighters staffing two engines, two ladder trucks, a rescue squad and two ambulances operated at the scene along with two command officers. An investigation by Palatine Fire Department investigators and Palatine Police initially indicates that the fire was intentionally set. The fire remains under investigation.

During these incidents, an additional ambulance call in the Village was also handled by the Palatine Rural Fire District, through a mutual aid agreement. Units from Elk Grove Township, Itasca and Barrington manned Palatine fire stations to maintain coverage during the incidents.

The Palatine Fire Department reminds residents that if you see or smell smoke, get out of the building and call the fire department. If your building has an alarm system, activate it by pulling a pull station on your way out to warn your neighbors. If you have any further questions, please call the Palatine Fire Department Public Education Office at (847) 202-6302.

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