



Palatine Fire Department

Incident Press Release

For Immediate Release

January 18, 2007

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502 E. Northwest Highway Fatal Commercial Structure Fire

On Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 12:20 pm the Palatine Fire Department responded to an activated fire alarm at 500 E. Northwest Highway, followed up by several calls reporting some type of fire or incident in the building. The first units arrived on the scene less than 5 minutes later, finding heavy fire and smoke coming out an overhead door and entry door for an auto repair business to the rear of the structure, the address of which is 502 E. Northwest Highway. They also received reports of possibly two people still trapped inside. The first crews made entry with a 2 ½” hose line to begin a search. Despite encountering heavy heat, low visibility and a rapidly spreading fire, they found one deceased victim inside, but because of the victim being trapped by debris and the deteriorating conditions they were unable to remove the victim. Due to the escalating fire and significant structural damage which made wall and roof collapse a great concern, interior fire crews were removed from the building and an exterior attack was made to knock down the fire. As all crews on scene were committed, the incident commander requested a Box Alarm, which brought in additional assistance from neighboring communities. In all, three hose lines, one deluge gun and an aerial tower stream were required to extinguish the fire. The

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fire was declared under control at 1:35 pm. After the fire was controlled, firefighters were able to re-enter the building and remove the victim, as well as perform overhaul and conduct a secondary search which confirmed that there was only one person in the building. One other occupant of the repair shop escaped before the fire department arrived, as well as eleven employees of the business in the front of the building. The fire is currently under investigation by the Palatine Fire Department, the Palatine Police Department and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. The victim's identity has not yet been released, and damage estimates are still being calculated.

In addition to the Palatine Fire Department, crews from Arlington Heights, Elk Grove Village, Buffalo Grove, Palatine Rural, Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, Mount Prospect, Barrington and Wooddale responded to the incident on the Box Alarm, manning a total of 5 engines, four ladder trucks, two rescue squads and six ambulances. In total, 44 firefighters, 10 command officers and 5 investigators operated on the scene. Crews from Elk Grove Township, Long Grove and Streamwood stood by in Palatine fire stations during the incident.

The Palatine Fire Department wants to stress the value of fire alarm systems, which give occupants early warning of a fire, and will simultaneously summon the Fire Department. As escape plans are important at home, they are also important when out in the community. Know the location of emergency exits wherever you are.

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