

Edwardsville Fire Department issues safety tips following chimney fire

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Firefighters from the Edwardsville and **Wood River** fire departments responded to a call on the **400 block of West Lake Drive** around 8:55 p.m. Thursday for a chimney fire.

Captain Robert Morgan of the **Edwardsville Fire Department** said a family of three was relaxing in their living room, enjoying a fire in their fire place when they heard a small roar coming from the chimney. Morgan said chimney fires often begin with such a sound, which he described as a "mini jet engine." The homeowner then went outside, Morgan said, and was able to see embers and darker smoke than usual coming from the chimney.

Upon arriving at the scene, Morgan said firefighters ensured the fire stayed within the confines of the chimney and used a special weighted nozzle to extinguish the fire in the chimney. That nozzle utilizes a fine mist to properly extinguish the fire without causing

the chimney to crack. The cause of the fire, Morgan said, was creosote, a tar-like compound, which accumulates within wood-burning chimneys.

After the fire was extinguished, firefighters used scoop shovels and wheelbarrows to clean the remaining debris from the fire pit. Morgan said the family was advised not to use the chimney again until it has been properly inspected by professionals.

"Chimneys should always be cleaned by a professional contractor once a year, before burning," Morgan said. "Creosote builds up. Creosote is a black tarry material, which leads to chimney fires. Those can spread throughout the home if the flue is not intact."

Luckily for the homeowners, their flue and chimney was intact, therefore the fire did not spread further into the home. Because of this, Morgan said the family's smoke detectors did not even sound an alarm. The fire was under control by 9:15 p.m., and units cleared the scene by 9:45 p.m.