

Godfrey Fire, other departments, battle explosion/structure fire in 700 block of Jackson

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Godfrey Fire battled a fire/explosion that Assistant Chief Eric Cranmer described as one of the more difficult in his 27-year career Tuesday at a residence in the 700 block of Jackson Lane in Godfrey.

Upon arrival, Cranmer confirmed a working structure fire at a one-story residence with heavy fire and smoke showing. Mutual aid was requested from Brighton and Fosterburg as well as assistance from off-duty Godfrey personnel.

"It was pretty tough just based on what the conditions were and the layout of the home," he said. "We encountered a narrow one-lane road and the home construction and layout in the home made it one of the tougher ones to extinguish. It was obvious there was a gas fed fire with the debris in the back yard. We felt it in our best interests to get the Illinois State Fire Marshal there."

Cranmer praised the Godfrey, Brighton and Fosterburg firefighters for their cooperative efforts.

"Everybody in all those departments and Alton when we work with Alton periodically works well together and gets along," he said. "It makes it easier when you have that expertise around you."

The firefighters kept a man from entering the house to attempt to save pets once it was roaring and completely unsafe.

"With the heat and the smoke that was coming out the front door and the turbulence, he wouldn't have gotten very far," Cranmer said. "We couldn't breach the ceiling in the beginning because it was built with wood and we had to take a chain saw and cut holes through. It was unique construction and the features of the home were added on, making it difficult."

Godfrey Fire Protection District Chief Erik Kambrian said a water supply was quickly established with the initial attack, but the water main serving the hydrant on Jackson Lane suffered a failure, leading to loss of water supply.

"Fosterburg responded with their engine to the next street over, Ramona Place, and manually laid hundreds of feet of supply line through yards to re-establish a supply," he said. "Tankers from Godfrey and Brighton responded as a contingency."

"One male occupant was transported to a local hospital by Lifestar EMS to be evaluated for minor burns and smoke inhalation from trying to re-enter the house to retrieve pets. Two dogs and a turtle were rescued by firefighters while two dogs perished and one cat is missing. Godfrey Fire Protection District (GFPD) provided the home owners with an 'After the Fire' information packet and respectfully handled the remains of the deceased family pets. The property is considered a total loss at \$75,000 and content loss is valued at \$50,000."

The Illinois State Fire Marshal is currently investigating the fire that appeared to start near a natural gas furnace and water heater. Illinois-American Water also responded to repair the damaged water main.

Number of fire personnel who responded were: 17 Godfrey, 12 Brighton, 5 Fosterburg
Fire Equipment: 2 Godfrey Engines, 1 Godfrey Tanker, 1 Godfrey Chief Unit, 1
Fosterburg Engine, 1 Brighton Pumper, 1 Brighton Heavy Rescue, 2 Brighton Tankers,
1 Brighton Chief Unit.