

Quick response stops fast-igniting structure fire at Runway Lounge, shields Pizza Hut

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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BETHALTO - A devastating, fast-igniting fire engulfed the **Runway Lounge in Bethalto** at 314 W. Bethalto Blvd. early Tuesday afternoon, leaving behind much destruction to the bar/restaurant.

The fire broke out about 1:20 p.m. Tuesday. Some quick responding Bethalto firemen and a superb mutual aid response from **Alton and Rosewood Heights Fire Departments** helped extinguish the heavy blaze in under 30 minutes, **Bethalto Fire Chief Alex Campbell** said.

Campbell praised the Bethalto Fire Department and the mutual aid assistance from Alton and Rosewood Heights for putting a “good stop” on the fire.

“We don’t yet have what the loss will be,” he said at the scene. “The Alton Fire Department helped a lot bringing their ladder truck to assist us in getting the fire stopped. The Bethalto firefighters all did a great job fighting the fire. All the training we do paid off today.”



The Bethalto chief pointed to the left side of the building where a remaining fire crept out of the structure and said that is where they believe the fire started in the front of the Runway Lounge structure.

Jason Myers, a driver for nearby Pizza Hut, said when he came outside of the restaurant he thought the fire started in the left hand corner of the building where the heater is positioned.

“I came outside right after it started,” he said. “The fire started and spread quickly. I saw the police and fire department people with smoke in their faces and they were there within five minutes of the start. They eventually cut a hole in the roof to fight the fire. I worried about the firefighters for a few minutes while they were fighting it.”

Myers was also concerned about the business he works for – **Pizza Hut** – within just a few feet nearby.

He said at the time the fire broke out, the Runway Lounge was quickly evacuated, as was the Pizza Hut restaurant with workers and customers.

“The bartender got out of the Runway Lounge quickly,” he said.

Pizza Hut manager Katie Hammond said it was indeed a “scare” for her crew. She said she was thankful everyone was able to get out of the restaurant safely and the same for the Runway Lounge staff.

“Everything went up pretty fast,” she said. “We all went out the door when it happened and made sure our customers were out safely.”

Chief Campbell stated the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

