



DSFM Fire Investigation Report

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reporting Investigator: Deschaine, Kristina

OSFM Report Number: 2023KLD013

Action Taken: Lead Investigator

Date of Report: 08/15/2023 12:20:49

Date & Time Fire Occurred: 07/06/2023 17:00:00

Investigation Requested From: Chief Mason, Depoe Bay

Fire Agency Jurisdiction: Unprotected Lane County

Date & Time Investigation Requested: 07/06/2023 21:00:00

Date & Time Investigation Started: 07/07/2023 07:00:00

Investigation Status: Complete

Referred To: OSP

Law Enforcement Involved: Yes

Law Enforcement Agency: Oregon State Police

Law Enforcement Lead Investigator: Jared Beck

Law Enforcement Report Number: SP23-206745

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Area Type: Structure

Location Type: Street Address

Address: 95330 Highway 101 Yachats, Oregon 97498 Lane

Location Comments: According to the Lane County Assessor's website -

Built - 1085
Square footage - 6405
First floor - 1990
Second floor - 2578
Third floor - 1573
Fourth floor - 324

Structure Occupancy: Occupied

Number Of Stories: 4

Estimated Age: 38

Construction Type: Other

Roof Type: Pitched

Roof Material: Wood

Exterior Covering: Wood

Foundation: Slab

Fire Suppression Equipment Present: No

Alarm Type: None

Door Condition: Opened And Unlocked

Cameras Present: No

Electrical Status: On

Fuel Status: None

Heating Systems

System Locations	Systems Type	Heating Systems Comments
Other	Electric	There were baseboard heaters and a large wood stove located on the second story. There was also an air circulation pump that was located in the center of the house on the fourth floor.

Water Status: On

Owner Occupant Information

Owner Occupant Type	Name	Address	Cell Phone	Email
Owner and Occupant	Staton , Pamela K	95330 Highway 101 Yachats , Oregon		
Occupant	Baldwin , Russell	95330 Highway 101 Yachats , Oregon		

LEGAL PRESENCE

Scene Secured: Yes

Securing Agency: Western Lane Fire & EMS

Authority To Enter: Exigency

Entry Authority I responded to the scene early in the morning after the fire. The fire department was still on scene. I

Notes: also received the permission to re-enter form filled out by the owner/occupant of the structure.

Fire service and Deputy State Fire Marshal authority and duty for inspecting and investigation derives from ORS 476.070 and 476.150. Oregon State Statute ORS 476.030(4) and ORS 476.210 gives the State Fire Marshal authority to investigate or cause an investigation to determine the probable cause, origin and circumstances of any fire and determine whether the fire was a result of carelessness or design.

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interviews Conducted By: OSFM Deputy

Witness Information

Interview Date	Type	Name	Date Of Birth	Address	Phone	Witness Statements
07/07/2023	Occupant	Baldwin , Russell		95330 Highway 101 , Yachats , Oregon 97498		<p>Mr. Baldwin was at home at the time of the fire.</p> <p>A couple of hours before the fire he had been on the fourth floor working on replacing the water faucet in the sink. He was using a dremel tool. The GFCI outlet next to the sink tripped so he went and an extension cord to to finish the job. He plugged it in at a different location. He went down stairs and was sitting on the couch relaxing for about an hour and a half when Mrs. Staton arrived home. She came in the house and asked if he was cooking. He said not why? She said that she could smell smoke. She went over to the dining area on the south side of the house and looked out the window. She said that the house was on fire. They went outside to get hoses to take to the third floor deck because there was a water spigot there. After it was connected they went up to the fourth floor to fight the fire. A short time later the glass from the deck broke and the fire started coming into the house. They evacuated then.</p> <p>Mr. Baldwin offered that the items that he could imagine starting the fire were the GFCI outlet or the air circulation pump that was on top of the house.</p>

07/07/2 023	Other Iverson , Dennis & Susie	95336 Highway 101 , Yachats , Oregon 97498	Mr. & Mrs. Iverson live next door to the north of the fire scene. Mrs. Iverson was outside watering the yard when she heard crackling noise like a fire. She looked around and saw the west side top floor deck of the house to the south was on fire. She started running over to let the owners know and they were just coming out of the house to get hoses to fight the fires with. Mr. Iverson called 911 (541-619-9527) and ran over and put a ladder up on the northwestern side of the house. He took a hose up and was putting water on the fire from that location. He said it did very little to the fire and it was windy.
07/07/2 023	Owner/ Occupant Staton , Pamela K	95330 Highway 101 , Yachats , Oregon 97498	They have lived on this property for approximately 18 months. They noticed that there were guests staying next door (Air B&B) over the weekend of July 4th. Mrs. Staton left the house at approximately 1515 hours. She ran errands to the post office, bank and store in Waldport. She arrived home at approximately 1700 hours. She walked into the house and smelled something burning. She asked Mr. Baldwin what was burning. She went to the breakfast window on the south side of the house and looked north and saw fire on the west side of the house. They went up to the fourth floor with hoses to fight the fire. They were fighting fire with the neighbors when the fire department arrived. The last guests left the property on July 5, 2023. The rooms were cleaned and ready to go.
07/31/2 023	Other Frannell , Josh & Crystall	95374 Highway 101 , Yachats , Oregon 97498	Mr. and Mrs. Frannell were at home at the time of the fire. Mrs. Frannell was making dinner. They received a text from a neighbor about the fire. They looked outside and saw that the top of the house was on fire. I asked them if there had been any fireworks in the area. I was told that the week before the fire there were a lot of fireworks. The day of the fire they do not remember seeing or hearing them.
08/02/2 023	Other Shepard , Barbra	95480 Highway 101 , Yachats , Oregon 97498	I spoke with Ms. Shepard on the phone. She was not on site when I stopped at the Sea Perch RV Resort (She is the Manager). I asked about fire works in the area around the day of the fire. I was informed that the beach is not part of the business. She did not remember any fireworks the day of the fire. They do go off pretty regularly though.
08/14/2 023	Other Bidgood , Clifford	95590 Highway 101 Unit 10 , Yachats , Oregon	Mr. and Mrs. Bidgood were home the day of the fire. For a couple of days before the fire there were lots of firework. They did not remember any on the day of the fire. There is a neighbor that lives to the south of him that sets them off mostly, but not the day of the fire.

INVESTIGATION INFORMATION

Participating Investigators Jared Beck/Oregon State Police Arson Unit/SP23-206745/Origin and Cause
(Name/Agency/Report#/Assignment): Dan Wells/Oregon State Police/Oregon State Police Arson Unit/SP23-206745/Origin and Cause

Investigation My duties as the lead fire investigator included interviews, fire patterns analysis, fire scene processing,
Activities: and documentation via digital photography.

Distances from the house to the edge of the grass to the west near the beach - 230 feet

Distance from the Sea Perch beach to the beach near the house - 1517 feet

Google earth distance from the Sea Perch to the house as the crow flies - 1578 feet

Exterior Examination: At the time of my arrival Western Lane EMS was still on scene ensuring that the fire did not rekindle. I was informed that there was a place on the third floor that kept rekindling throughout the night and it was still burning. More water was put on it to keep it at bay. See photo 0123 for the specific location that was still burning at the time of my arrival. I ended up being the bathroom on the third floor. The fire was in a closet that was difficult to reach with a hose line from the exterior.

I completed an exterior examination taking photos as I went.

The house was not a typically built home. It was built as a pyramid of sorts. It was named the Ziggurat because of the shape of it. From above it looks like a plus sign. There is a center section that was 4 stories tall. The 4 legs of the building all go out from the center section.

The north side of the house can be seen in photo 0118. The opening to the garage was at this location. The third and fourth floors were burned and seen in this photo. The first and second stories did not have fire damage from the exterior.

The west side of the house is shown in photos 0120 and 0121. There is an exterior door on the second floor from a green house type of patio on the west side. The third and fourth floors had fire damage that was seen from the exterior. The first and second floors had no fire damage from the exterior.

Facing east, the south side of the house can be seen in photo 0123. The third and fourth floors had fire damage to them. The first and second floors did not have fire damage to the exterior.

Facing west looking at the east side of the house, see photo 0115. The front door to the house was on this side of the house. The fire damage was up high on the house mostly to the third and fourth floors. There was some burning to the wall of the second story on the southeast side of the house, see the left side of photo 0015.

Interior Examination: I entered the house through the front door on the east side of the house, see photo 0127 and 0128. This entrance takes you to a landing that has stairs to the bottom floor and stairs to the second floor. The first floor of the house had no fire damage. There was water damage from the water being put on the fire but there was no burning that took place. The first floor had the garage/storage space and 2 rooms that were used as Air BnB rentals.

The second story of the house was where the living room (photo 0131), the dining room and kitchen (photo 0133), and a breakfast room. This floor did not burn but did have falling sheet rock and fire debris that had fallen from the upper floors.

There were a set of stairs on the west side of the house that were from the second story enclosed patio that looked to be used as a green house. See photo 0121. There was an extension cord in the space that went outside. The female end was melted on the neutral and the ground plugs, see photo 0222.

I went to the stairs on the second story that went up to the third floor on the west side of the house. There was a landing half way up and then the stairs changed direction and went up towards the east, see photo 0134. From this location I could see the stairs to the fourth floor (left side of the photo) and the ceiling of the third floor and floor of fourth floor. There were saddle burns to that showing that the fire was above on the fourth floor and burned down in this location.

The third floor had an office space on the north side that was the sheet rock was off of the wall but it was not burned inside the wall, see photo 0148. A storage area on the east side that was burned. The sheet rock was mostly intact except for the ceiling and a couple places high on the walls, see photo 0147. A bathroom and another office area on the south side. The south side of this floor was burned more than the other areas, see photo 0140. This area is the area that had rekindled several times throughout the night and was on fire still at the time of my arrival, see photo 0123. The area of the rekindle was a closet and bathroom that was difficult to get water on from the exterior. The fire was still burning in the wall between the closet and the bathroom, see photo 0142. The bathroom that was located to the south of the closet still had some sheet rock on the walls but the ceiling was burned away and the wall it shared with the office space was burned but still standing, see photo 0144. Here was a small room with a book shelf in the corner of the southwest intersection of the third floor, see photo 0139. There was a door to the room but inside the room was open to the second story below with a diagonal wall that went down. The inside of the room was not burned but had smoke damage to it. The wall and door that were on the third floor for the room were burned through, see photo 0139.

The landing on the third floor and the set of stairs that went down to the west were delayed and the debris was examined for fire patterns and items that may have fallen from the fourth floor deck. There was insulation, some wood building materials, some sheet rock and a garden hose. The one that the owner said they were taking upstairs to fight the fire, see photo 0136. After the fire debris was removed we found that there was unburned carpet on the floor (see photo 0203), down the stairs (photo 0211) and on the next landing down, see photo 0212. On the floor near the bottom of the fourth floor stairs (on the third floor) there was a light fixture that the cover fell to the floor and the fixture remain in the ceiling where it had been, see photo 0208. We removed it from that location so that the top of it could be examined. The aluminum housing was melted on the east side of it compared to the west side, see photo 0205. The underside that was open to the third floor had soot on it but was not melted.

The stairs to the fourth floor had the fire debris removed from them and examined. The stairs were not burned and the carpet was intact, see photo 0207. There were building materials on them. The fourth

floor had the master bedroom, bathroom and a seating area. The west side of the house is where the seating area was located. Outside the seating area is where the fourth floor deck was located and where the owner reported finding the fire, see photo 0173. The south side of the fourth floor had the bathroom, to the west side was the sink that Mr. Baldwin had been working on before the fire and the location of the troublesome GFCI outlet, see photo 0187. To the east of the sink was the door leading to the south deck on the fourth floor. To the east of the door was the water closet. The east side of the master is where the bed was located, see photo 0192. According to the owner this area also had a book shelf. The north side of this room is the space that contained the chimney and the pump for the air circulation system, see photo 0194. The walls of this space still had the studs intact and the chimney and pump were both still in place.

The large pieces of fire debris were removed from the fourth floor western side. In the space we found the bottom rail of the door to the deck. It was on the northwest corner of the room and melted from the outside of the door to the inside, see photo 0207. The bottom plate of the exterior wall was examined. It also had fire patterns showing that it burned from the outside in, see photo 0217. There was an outlet on the north wall of the seating area near the door to the deck, see photo 0218. The insulation was still on the Romex wiring, the wall stud was burned on the side away from the outlet and toward the deck. The outlet was eliminated as a cause for this fire. The wiring on the south side of the seating area was also examined. There were no arching or failures in the wiring that I could see, see photo 0186. The fire patterns on the structure around that space did not lead me to believe that it was a cause of this fire.

Narrative: After examining the fire scene the cause of the fire was not able to be determined. The fire origin is on the fourth floor deck and it burned away entirely.

EVIDENCE INFORMATION

Evidence Collected By: No Evidence Collected

ORIGIN AND CAUSE INFORMATION

Origin and Cause Comments: The origin of this fire is on the fourth floor deck. The cause is undetermined.

I interviewed several of the neighbors to ask about fireworks or anything else that they saw. I was told that there were not fireworks noticed on the day of the fire.

The conclusions in this report are based on the evidence and information obtained during the investigation, as well as on the individual investigator's experience, training and education. If additional information or evidence becomes known, the investigator reserves the right to reexamine the case and modify their opinions or conclusions as necessary.

Cause Classification: Undetermined

The conclusions in this report are based on the evidence and information obtained during the investigation, as well as on the individual investigator's experience, training and education. If additional information or evidence becomes known, the investigator reserves the right to reexamine the case and modify their opinions or conclusions as necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Prepared By - Digital Signature: Deschaine, Kristina
Title - Deputy State Fire Marshal

Date: 08/15/2023
12:20:49

Administrative Review By - Digital Signature:
Title - Supervising Deputy State Fire Marshal

Date Reviewed:

