

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Capt. Scott Van Ness

Sunday, December 04, 2011

Erik Taylor, Fire investigator

FIRE DAMAGES BACK PORCH OF SUNNYSIDE HILL HOME

Two dogs escaped unharmed

PULLMAN—A neighbor who saw smoke coming from the attic of a residential home and grabbed his fire extinguisher was given credit for preventing what could have been a serious house fire Sunday afternoon on Sunnyside Hill in Pullman.

The neighbor, who firefighters identified as Spencer Clawson, called 911 just before 1 pm to report that the house at 535 Winter Circle was on fire. Captain Scott VanNess said that as his crew was coming up Center Street, they could smell and see smoke coming from the area. As they arrived, they found the fire coming from the back of the residence by the enclosed porch. VanNess then called in a second alarm which also brought a response from Whitman County Rural District 12.

Fire investigator Erik Taylor said Clawson went next door and found no one at home and then used his dry chemical fire extinguisher to try and put out most of the fire. Firefighters said his action slowed down the progression of the fire and probably kept it from further damaging the interior of the home.

As firefighters from Pullman opened up the back door, they could hear dogs in the house but smoke prevented them from seeing the animals. As soon as the door opened, one of the dogs took off and the other was helped by a firefighter to safety. Both dogs were reunited with their owners in good condition.

Taylor said the fire was caused by unextinguished smoking material that ignited in a bucket next to the house which started the exterior wall of cedar shingles on fire. He said the damage was confined to the exterior of the house with little interior damage. He estimated the damage at between \$5,000 and \$10,000 but an exact estimate will come from the homeowner's insurance company.

The two residents, and their dogs, were allowed to return to the home in a couple of hours after firefighters finished at the scene.

---PFD---

(Written by Glenn Johnson, PFD/PIO)