

Recent fires, accident around Scottsburg keep local department bustling

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One injury accident east of Scottsburg and several fires around the city gave the Scottsburg Volunteer Fire Department a stretch of activity at the end of 2009.

Chief James Richey said rescuers used the Jaws of Life on a vehicle on December 28 that had been struck from behind by a large grain hauler at the intersection of State Roads 56 and 203.

The Scottsburg department was assisting Lexington Volunteer Fire Department on that accident. The driver of the pickup truck that was hit, Harold Bowen, was freed from the wreckage in about ten minutes. Bowen was later found to have suffered no broken bones. His late model pickup was a total loss.

On Tuesday, December 29, an early morning structure fire occurred at 2 a.m. on Lynhurst Street in Scottsburg.

Chief Richey said tenants of the house owned by Tim Hutchinson lost electrical power around midnight. "The husband and wife decided she would take their child and go and stay with relatives and the husband would stay there. He told me he woke up around 2 a.m. because he just felt something wasn't right. He touched an upstairs wall and felt heat. That's when he called the fire department," related the fire chief.

It was a good thing he did: firemen found a blaze in the attic of the two-story house. It was extinguished quickly with perhaps less than \$2,000 damage to the structure.

While Scottsburg firefighters were finishing that blaze, they were called to Hampton Inn at the Interstate 65 interchange.

According to the story Chief Richey received from parties involved, a woman traveler rented a room around 1 a.m. She heated some towels in her room's microwave to warm her feet, putting them under the bed covers and falling asleep. She woke up some time later to find the covers smoldering.

The woman reportedly threw some water on the bed and then contacted the night desk clerk to report the incident. The clerk attacked the covers with a fire extinguisher, but that still did not put out the fire that had infiltrated the mattress.

When firemen were called to the scene around 3:45 a.m., the room was ablaze. Fortunately, flames were contained within the room, but smoke and water damage to that area on the motel's second floor and rooms beneath it was fairly serious.

Shortly after 8 a.m. on Wednesday, December 20, Chief Richey was on his way back to the Hampton Inn to meet an investigator with the State Fire Marshal's Office. He was paged via a 9-1-1 call received by the Scott County Communications Center about a truck fire in Scottsburg's Beechwood Park.

As the fire chief traveled west on McClain Avenue, he said he looked to the south and saw a column of smoke in the area of the park. He diverted to the site, asking the investigator to meet him there.

When he arrived, Chief Richey found a pickup truck with its cab fully ablaze. A young man, later identified as John Hawn, and two other people, Jonathan White Jr. and Heather White, were eventually arrested in connection with the incident. The truck fire, it was ruled, was the result of an explosion occurring in a mobile lab constructed to manufacture the illegal drug methamphetamine.

That scene was eventually wrapped up by the department around 3 p.m.