



# Klamath County Fire District No. 1

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## PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Jim Kenworthy, Fire Marshal

Phone: (541) 885-2056

### South Spring Street Fire Investigation Update

A final determination of the cause of the fire has not been made. The investigation is expected to continue for the immediate future. Anyone having photos or other information regarding the fire should feel free to contact the Fire District at (541) 885-2056.

As of early this afternoon, fire investigators had gathered all of the pertinent information available at the fire scene. At that time, Klamath County Fire District No. 1 released the fire scene to the affected property owners and their respective insurance companies. One of the owners immediately began sifting through debris looking for anything that may have survived the fire.

Given the devastation of the fire and number of agencies and fire fighting personnel that responded to the fire, investigators are amazed that there were no reported injuries to firefighters or members of the public. At the height of the fire, flames were estimated to have been 30 to 40 feet above the roof of the furniture store as fire fighters surrounded and battled the fire from all sides.

Fortunately, fires of this magnitude do not frequently occur in Klamath Falls. However it is gratifying to know that when multiple agencies engage in fighting a major fire that they work together seamlessly and effectively to contain and extinguish the fire. Without the combined efforts of local fire departments, this fire could have easily spread to other adjacent buildings.

To date, the investigation has revealed that the automatic fire sprinkler system in the furniture store was not operational at the time of the fire. If the sprinkler system had been fully operational it is most likely that the fire would have been limited to one building and extinguished with only moderate damage.

Klamath County Fire District No. 1 urges the owners of all businesses that are equipped with automatic fire sprinkler systems to have them inspected and serviced at least annually. Copies of the annual inspection and maintenance reports should be sent to the Fire District at 143 N. Broad Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97601. Businesses are also encouraged to contact the Fire Prevention Division at (541) 885-2056 if they have questions about the maintenance requirements for a fire sprinkler system.

If you have an opportunity to drive by the fire scene, please note that the spread of the fire to the north was limited effectively by the 2 or 3 hour fire rated masonry wall on the south side of the Heaton Steel

building which sustained little damage. Subsequently, the south wall of the furniture store and the adjacent north wall of the Cummings Roofing warehouse were wood framed with no fire resistive rating which allowed the fire to rapidly spread from one building to the other.

Clearly, properly installed and maintained fire sprinkler systems and fire rated walls do save lives and reduce property loss in the event of a fire.

Additional press releases will be distributed as more information becomes available.

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