



NEWS RELEASE

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(Update on Nyberg Historic House Fire)

Last Wednesday, January 2, at 11:30 pm, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue responded to a fire at the Nyberg Historic House. When firefighters arrived they found the entire first floor of the building engulfed with fire spreading to the second and third floor of the structure. Weighing the heavy volume of fire and potential for a roof collapse with the fact that the building had been unoccupied for years, incident commanders made the decision to safely battle the fire defensively from the exterior.

Firefighters aggressively fought the fire for over an hour and extinguished hot spots throughout the night. Due to its age, the house had a balloon-construction framework and lathe-and-plaster walls – both of which likely contributed to the fire spreading rapidly throughout the house. (*Note: Balloon construction involves wall studs that run continuously from the first floor sill to the top plate or end rafter of the top floor. This method allows fire to rapidly travel from lower floors to the top unless some type of fire stop material is used at each floor. Contemporary light-weight residential construction involves constructing each floor's walls independent of other floors. Contemporary construction also utilizes sheetrock upon the walls. This too slows fire spread.*)

The fire caused extensive damage throughout the structure including a roof that has collapsed onto the second story and burnt flooring, walls, and other structural members. Not only has this resulted in the building likely being a complete loss, but the damage has compromised the structural integrity of the house making it unsafe for fire investigators to enter.

Until the danger of working beneath unstable structural members is eliminated, the fire investigation remains on-hold. Waiting to safely enter the house has not harmed or compromised the fire investigation. TVF&R's Fire Prevention Division and Technical Rescue Team expect to evaluate the building today and determine what actions are needed to ensure the stability of the house, including the use of heavy equipment to remove the roof and possibly the second and portions of the first floor.

The home was not occupied nor did it have electrical power at the time of the fire. Based on that, investigators have already ruled out electrical, as well as cooking equipment, as potential causes.

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