

MEDIA RELEASE

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Beaverton Warehouse Set on Fire by Juveniles

On Wednesday, May 6th, at 7:51 pm the Beaverton Police Department was dispatched to assist Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (TVFR) with a fire at a local warehouse: 5150 SW Western Avenue. The property manager had called 911 after discovering water and smoke coming from the rear portion of the large, subdivided, concrete building. He was initially on the property to take care of another unrelated issue.

Shortly afterwards both police officers and fire fighters arrived on scene and it was soon discovered the building had been forcefully entered and numerous small fires had been set. Both the Beaverton Police Department and TVFR worked together as to the cause of the fire.

Initial investigations showed the suspects had entered through a hole made in one of the large roll up bay doors. A board panel had been broken out allowing enough room for the suspects to climb through, gaining entry. The only items stored inside were furnishings, equipment, and office furniture from the old Greenwood Inn. This was all kept in one large portion of the multi-roomed warehouse.

Once the fire was extinguished and it was safe to walk through the building, officers and arson investigators found evidence that multiple fires had been set, in addition to general criminal mischief. All together approximately 11 different individual sites were found a fire had been started and some form of damage had occurred.

Some of the damage found was things in the nature of fires set on metal shelving using paper or chairs set on fire leaving only the frame intact. Bed sheets were burned throughout the warehouse with bottles of lighter fluid left nearby; while stacks of mattresses and other furniture were destroyed. Damage to the building itself, although limited to the specific areas these items had been stored, was extensive and is estimated to cost in the tens of thousands to repair.

During firefighting operations the fire department was forced to break out twelve skylights to help with ventilation. Walls had been scared from the flames and soot, blackening what were once white walls. There was also water and smoke damage done to both the building itself and all the remaining furnishings.

During the initial arrival of the Beaverton Police Department an officer noticed a white male juvenile hanging around the area. The officer talked with the juvenile and quickly discovered this subject had been involved with the fires. The suspect, Nathaniel Lozano (15) of Beaverton, told the officer he and two friends had been curious as to what was inside the warehouse and broke in. After the fires were started all three subjects supposedly left the area, however, it's unclear why Lozano returned or was still on scene when police arrived.

Officers followed additional leads and shortly afterwards arrested a second suspect, 16 year old Adam Chervin from Tigard. Both juveniles were lodged at Donald E. Long Detention Center on charges of Burglary II, Arson II, and Criminal Mischief I. The investigation is still ongoing and will continue as to the identity and arrest of the third suspect.

As you may be aware this week is also Arson Awareness Week. When a fire occurs fire fighters are dispatched along with seasoned and trained fire investigators. They, along with law enforcement, work as a team to conduct a meticulous investigation. All fires are initially treated as a crime.

In describing arson, it is the crime of committing an intentional or incendiary fire. While there are many reasons why a suspect would set such a fire, studies have shown those specific to juvenile fire setting are most often for the purposes of being a hero, thrill seeking, or vandalism. Nationally 50% of all fires occur outdoors, 30% in structures, and 20% in vehicles. Current studies have also shown that half of all arson arrests are juveniles.

For more information about arson awareness week please contact your local fire department.

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