



## **NEWS RELEASE**

Date: June 8, 2010  
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### **(Fire Investigator Determines Cause of Early Morning Fire to Be Improper Disposal of Smoking Materials)**

Just after 4 a.m. this morning, firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue and Lake Oswego Fire Department responded to reports of a garage on fire in the 6000 block of SW Montauk Circle in Lake Oswego (*just within TVF&R's jurisdictional boundary*). First-arriving firefighters were met with a large volume of fire in a multi-garage unit attached to adjacent apartments. A search of the nearby apartments on the first and second stories of the complex was initiated while firefighters began to extinguish the fire.

Within ten minutes and two searches of the dwellings closest to the fire, it was confirmed that there were no trapped residents. Though there were working smoke alarms in the apartments, an alert and conscientious passerby was what awoke the sleeping residents. Melissa Burton was driving down SW Childs Road when she saw flames in the distance. She headed towards the fire while calling 9-1-1. Once she arrived at the apartments, Ms. Burton began yelling to occupants and knocking on doors alerting them to the threatening fire. Four residents evacuated as a result of Ms. Burton's determination.

The activation of 9-1-1 and quick suppression efforts kept the fire from spreading into living quarters, though two garage units, some shared attic space and an adjacent storage room were destroyed. The total damage estimate of the structure and contents is \$200,000. Two residents have been displaced as a result of the fire and they are being assisted by friends and family.

After careful examination of physical evidence, burn patterns and witness interviews, TVF&R Fire Investigator Jeremy Foster has determined that the most probable cause of the fire was the improper disposal of smoking materials outside one of the garage units. Photos below are courtesy of Deputy Fire Marshal Jeremy Foster.

"Many people would have assumed that help was already on the way and just continued driving. Ms. Burton, however, was decisive and selfless in her actions. Her efforts resulted in early activation of 9-1-1 and may have spared these people from harm. We are very grateful for people like Melissa Burton," stated Cassandra Ulven.



*Overhead view of the fire damage.*

