Fire guts Keowee building

2nd fire in 2 days destroys maintenance facility

BY BRETT MCLAUGHLIN
THE JOURNAL

SALEM — Keowee firefighters barely had time to catch their breath from a devastating Sunday morning lake house fire when they were called out again Monday night to battle a blaze at a maintenance building in Keowee Key.

Flames of unknown origin ripped through the 6-bay, 8,000 square-foot building about 11 p.m.

Firefighters were initially dispatched to a fire behind the Key Mart convenience store, 1225 Stamp Creek Road, just down the road from the fire station, before being corrected and sent in the opposite direction when a responding fire volunteer spotted the blaze on Maintenance Road. Fire Chief Richie Caudill said the blaze had a 20-minute jump on responders.

"It was open on one end so it was basically burning free," Caudill said. "We concentrated on protecting some fuel tanks at one end of the building.

Caudill offered no estimate on damage but said the loss would be substantial. Destroyed in the fire

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Fire destroyed the Keowee Key Property Owners Association maintenance building Monday night. It was the second major fire in the gated community in two days after a lake home was destroyed just after midnight Saturday.

FIRE: Likely will be deemed accidental, Caudill says

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were several lawnmowers, a pickup, a skid steer, a trailer and a great deal of small equipment such as chainsaws and trimmers.

"The guys got it under control quickly, but we weren't going to save it," the chief said.

Investigators probed the charred remains on Tuesday but found nothing suspicious. Caudill said the fire would likely be deemed accidental.

"It was inside a locked fence and nothing appeared to be missing," he said.

Keowee firefighters were assisted by Corinth-Shiloh, Ebenezer, Salem and Station 21 personnel. The scene was not cleared until late Tuesday morning.

Caudill said it is unusual for his department to have back-to-back fires of such a serious nature.

About midnight Saturday, responders were called to a home at 16 Dinghy Court, where flames caused an estimated $1 million damage to the David Lasier home. Six members of the family escaped with their lives moments before fire consumed the home.

The cause of that blaze remains unknown.

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