Firefighters work 3 fires

BY LADONNA BEEKER
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OCONEE COUNTY — Not only were Oconee County emergency personnel assisting with two lake deaths in the last several days, but they were also responding to three house fires from Monday night into Tuesday morning.

At 7:45 p.m. Monday, Keowee Key Fire Chief Richie Caudill said his crew responded to an attic fire on Cove Lane on Keowee Key.

"There was fire coming through the roof on one side," Caudill said, adding the fire was started by a lightning strike. "The fire was contained within 10 minutes."

Caudill said there were at least two people at home at the time of the fire, but they evacuated the home prior to firefighters responding.

In addition to Keowee Key firefighters, others responded from Keowee-Ebenezer, Corinth-Shiloh and Oconee Emergency Services.

"Firefighters operated on scene for two hours to conduct salvage and overhaul to prevent further damage," said Oconee County Fire Chief Charlie King.

Next, at 8:14 p.m. Monday, firefighters were called to an unoccupied home on Buckthorne Lane within the Falls South area of The Cliffs, which too, was caused by a lightning strike, King said.

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FIRES: In past year, responders went to almost 7,000 calls in an hour

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"Several mutual aid agencies were requested to assist with the fire due to the size of the structure and the related workload," King said. "Firefighters were able to confine the fire to several rooms within the house. EMS was requested to treat two firefighters on the scene, neither of these were transported from the incident."

About 60 firefighters worked at the scene for six hours. Red Cross assisted with hydrating fire crews.

Those responding to the incident were Salem, Pickett Post-Camp Oak, Keowee-Ebenezer, Keowee, Corinth-Shiloh, Oconee Emergency Services, Salem Rescue, Walhalla Rescue, Shady Grove Fire Department from Pickens County and Vineyards Fire Department from Pickens County.

"The quick response to this fire can be credited to the home having a working fire alarm system that was able to alert responders quickly," King said.

There was no rest for firefighters when at 8:37 p.m. Monday, a home on Eller Way in the Cleveland area of Oconee County was fully-engulfed in flames, King said.

"The fire was brought under control within 15 minutes," King said. "Firefighters operated on scene for about 2 hours."

The Red Cross assisted the family. Those responding to the scene were Cleveland, Westminster, Long Creek and Shiloh Fire Department from Stephens, Ga. The cause of the Eller Way fire is under investigation.

"The past 48 hours on Oconee County have proven the professionalism and dedication of our firefighters," King said Tuesday. "These volunteers give up time away from their jobs and family to serve the needs of the community by responding to incidents."

During the past 12 months, responders in Oconee County have answered almost 7,000 calls for service and participated in 14,000 training hours.

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Several area fire departments responded to this house fire on Buckthorne Lane in The Cliffs. The fire was reported at 8:14 p.m. Monday between two other emergency calls for structure fires. Firefighters stayed on the scene for six hours.

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