Neighborhood clubhouse lost in morning fire



JEAN MACGUFFIE | SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Firefighters from five departments worked for roughly an hour to put out an early-morning blaze that leveled the clubhouse in the Waterside Crossing neighborhood just off S.C. Highway 183 on Wednesday near Seneca.

BY ERIC SPROTT
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — No injuries were reported, but an Oconee County neighborhood no longer has its community clubhouse following an early-morning blaze Wednesday.

The fire at Waterside Crossing, which sits just off S.C. Highway 183 on the shores of Lake Keowee outside Seneca city limits, was reported shortly after 2 a.m. after a security guard from Keowee Key saw the flames across the lake.

The Keowee Fire Department was the first of five stations to respond to the fire, while Keowee Rescue 22 was also on scene.

Oconee County Fire Chief Charlie King said it took firefighters roughly an hour to put out the blaze, which leveled the clubhouse.

And while the fire remains under investigation, King said foul play was ruled out after officials reconvened to survey the damage around 9 a.m. Wednesday morning.

"We have no reason to believe that it was intentional or an arson fire at all," he said. "We think something in the building caused the fire to start, but right now, we're just leaving it as an undetermined cause.

"The electrical panel in that building had a good many control systems for the swimming pool and some auxiliary lighting and things, and we didn't want to open those up and go in to test ... and mess it up for (the insurance company's) investigator."

King added the clubhouse was struck by lightning eight years ago, disabling the building's alarm system. He also said the building had some issues since the lightning strike, and neighborhood officials had been "trying to work through some problems with the building."

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