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Commercial Vehicle Fire Spreads to Commercial Business

(Arcata, CA) – May 27, 2020, 7:06 A.M. – Arcata Fire District was dispatched to a vehicle fire at the intersection of 11th Street and N Street in Arcata. The first engine arriving, within three minutes out of the Arcata Fire Station, reported a fully involved commercial vehicle with fire extension to a commercial structure. The officer from the first engine immediately upgraded the response to a commercial structure fire then deployed a hose line to extinguish the fire spreading to the adjacent building. The next arriving engine from McKinleyville Fire Station, arriving approximately nine minutes later, went into the commercial building to check for occupants and fire extension. The officer from the second engine advised the Incident Commander that the fire had not spread inside but reported smoke inside of the business. The officer also reported they had searched for occupants with none found. Arcata Police Department began evacuating adjacent businesses that were threatened and assisted with traffic control.

The estimated loss is \$10,451.00 and the value saved is \$2,970,660. There are eight businesses operating out of the entire structure that were threatened. Battalion Chief Campbell reports, “This is a good example of why we have fire stations strategically placed and why it is important to have those stations staffed with full-time career firefighters. The quick response from the Arcata Station is what allowed us to quickly extinguish this fire and save almost \$3 million in property. This fire would have been inside of the business in another minute.”

The cause of the fire is under investigation by Arcata Police and Arcata Fire District. The fire is human caused and suspicious in nature. There were no injuries reported. There were a total of five firefighters on scene and two Chief Officers. The Arcata Fire District thanks Blue Lake Fire, Humboldt Bay Fire, and Samoa Fire for covering stations during the incident.

“It is absurd that we are fighting a commercial structure fire with only four on duty firefighters. We had a fifth firefighter respond off duty and we had mutual aid coming in another 10-15 minutes. This level of staffing is dangerous. Every day we are rolling the dice on community and firefighter safety”, reports Battalion Chief Campbell.

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