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### Medical Aid or Structure Fire?

(McKinleyville, CA) – April 2, 2017 – Arcata Fire District quickly extinguished a wind-driven fire on the 1700 block of Bird Avenue in McKinleyville. Initially, the McKinleyville engine was dispatched for a medical aid after the Emergency Command Center received limited information from the caller. The only information the caller gave was that they needed help. The caller hung up before giving additional information. The dispatch center began receiving additional calls from other parties indicating a house was on fire and sent the appropriate resources.

When the first engine arrived, the officer reported moderate smoke coming from a single-family dwelling and the fire was gaining momentum. Fire Captain Padula reported, “When I located the fire room, I realized the door had burned through and the high winds were pushing hard on the fire. Conditions were changing rapidly and access to the fire room was very challenging due to layout of the property.”

Due to limited access, the first engine used four fire extinguishers to hold the fire as the second arriving engine stretched a hose line inside of the structure. As crews were preparing for a fire attack inside of the building, an adult male was seen walking into the smoke filled-structure and soon. “I looked up and saw a man walk in the front door and disappear. I notified Captain Padula and his team that we had a known rescue. They had to stop their fire attack, come to the front of the building, and search for the man. I never saw him come out but it turns out he had made it out on his own.” Battalion Chief Sean Campbell goes on to explain how, “this delayed our fire control and changed our objectives in a hurry”. Meanwhile, the fire began to gain momentum as it was being fed by high wind conditions.

Crews controlled the fire within 10 minutes; however, units remained on scene for two hours in order to complete overhaul, salvage, and investigation duties.

Arcata Fire District sent three engines, one chief, and a logistics unit while receiving mutual-aid from CALFIRE, Blue Lake Fire District, Fieldbrook Fire District, and Humboldt Bay Fire. Extra resources were requested to the scene when the crews saw the man disappear into the structure. This delayed the fire attack and the high wind conditions created a potential for rapid fire extension. The Red Cross was requested to assist two people that were displaced as a result of the fire.

Arcata Fire District would like to remind the public it is unsafe to enter a building that is on fire.

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