

Downtown fire: Newland gets a scare

Written by

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An electrical fire in downtown Newland prompted the quick action of area firefighters and local law enforcement: on extra alert because of weekend fires that gutted Spruce Pine one county away.

Newland Police Chief Jason Brown was paged at home. He met with Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frye, and while firefighters were responding to the scene, the two sent officers to be on the lookout for suspicious activity.

According to Newland Fire Chief Dale Benfield, firefighters had to break a business door down at 500 Linville Street, near the Avery Journal-Times, to get to the fire.

The fire had almost gone out by the time the first firefighters arrived- within two minutes of the initial call. It was contained to one unit of the building, a clothing store that also imprints tee shirts.

30 firefighters from Newland, Linville and Crossnore were all on the scene within 8 minutes- a feat Benfield says is incredible.

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According to Benfield, firefighters have been on extra alert since the Spruce Pine incident.

While the fire marshal soon concluded the fire was electrical, Avery County did not take any chances. Patrol cars from both Avery County Sheriff's Office and Newland Police Department continued to monitor the streets- just in case.

Brown hopes that's as close as Newland will get to the Spruce Pine incident.

"If something happened in Newland like that, it would be the same devastation if not worse than it did in Spruce Pine. I don't believe anybody could be prepared to have that many fires at one time," Brown said.

The property affected is owned by Stanley Carver.