

\$60,000 fire proves fatal for dog: Still under investigation

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While the house on Hickory Nut Gap Road in Avery County is still standing after last Wednesday's blaze, reparations will be expensive according to Avery Fire Marshal David Charles Vance.

He says they may exceed \$60,000.

Hopefully insurance will cover some of the cost to John Lee Thompson Jr.'s property, but that has not been determined. Vance was at the scene with insurance investigators earlier this week. The fire is particularly puzzling because it appeared to start in a sunroom. The cause has not been determined.

Even more troubling than money, a small black dog lost its life in the fire according to Banner Elk firefighter Peter Romanowski.

After the initial knockdown, a second sweep revealed the canine under a blanket.

Firefighters pulled the dog out of the building and proceeded to perform CPR for several minutes, according to Romanowski. The efforts proved futile.

While no humans were injured during the blaze, the dog's death struck firefighters like Romanowski hard.

While the fire was relatively easy to control, it was an event firefighters from Banner Elk, Newland, Linville and the Ladder Company will not soon forget.