

Iconic Galice Resort destroyed in fire

June 14, 2021



Southern Oregon is mourning the loss of the iconic Galice Resort, a lodge, restaurant and outpost along the Rogue River, after a structure fire broke out Tuesday.

At 10:32 a.m. Tuesday, firefighters with Josephine County Rural Metro Fire were dispatched to the resort after receiving reports of smoke in the building. As staff from the store exited, they reported seeing fire activity “in the floor,” according to a Tuesday press release from JCRMF.

As firefighters arrived, they began working on knocking down the immediate fire while Oregon Department of Forestry workers assisted in preventing spread to the surrounding natural area. Firefighters pumped water from the Rogue River into the fire while a helicopter dropped water on nearby vegetation.

While firefighters successfully prevented the fire from spreading to the neighboring raft rental building and rental cabins, the main building which held both the store and restaurant, are a total loss.

An investigation into the cause of the fire will begin as soon as the area is safe to enter, according to fire officials.

“The Galice Resort has been a mainstay in the community for 41 years although the building itself has been around much longer. Its role in the area took on new meaning as COVID restrictions were lifted, due to its capacity to serve significant numbers of people who were ready to get back outside, eat a good meal among friends and once again listen to live music,” read the release.

West of Merlin and about 65 miles upriver from Gold Beach, the Galice Resort has been known as a rafting hub on the Rogue since Mary Lou and Gil Thomason took over the small lodge and cafe in 1981 and began renting out rafts shortly thereafter. Over the years, Mary Lou and Gil expanded the lodge and business until Gil’s death in 2011. Then, the business was passed down to the current owner, their daughter Debbie Thomason.

More than 35 firefighters from multiple agencies responded to the blaze, including Grants Pass Fire Rescue, Rogue River Fire and Oregon Department of Forestry.