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NEWS

New Details / Plant fire cause still a puzzle

October 30, 2019

The cause of a fire on Oct. 23, that destroyed the the Pac-Nor Barreling plant, at 99299 Overlook Road in Brookings, may not be known for months, according to Harbor Fire interim Chief Thomas Sorrentino.

Harbor Fire is the lead investigating agency. Specific details about the investigation have not yet been released.

Brookings Fire Operations Chief Jim Watson said such an investigation can be very meticulous and detailed.

“We start from the outside and go from there to trace the point of origin.” he said “A lot of data needs to be established.”

Plant owner Chris Dichter said members of his crew had been working on a lathe when the fire erupted inside an adjacent wall.

“I’d never seen anything go like that,” Dichter said. “It blew up with smoke and fire. It sounded like a tree fell on the plant.”

As the fire erupted, all employees were able to get out of the 7,000 square-foot plant safely.

Eleven Brookings Fire & Rescue firefighters, including Watson, arrived first on the scene to attack the intense blaze. Additional fire crews from surrounding communities were brought in to help battle the fire. Heat and the fast moving flames kept the crews at a distance as they moved hoses around the building to spray water on the blaze. Limited area water resources meant crews had to bring in additional water tankers and pump water from a nearby pond as they worked to control the fire.

After several hours, the fire was out, but the plant was destroyed.

Fire crews were able to keep the fire from spreading to nearby structures and the adjacent forest. There were no injuries reported.

In all about 45 firefighters were one scene, according the Watson, including Gold Beach, Cape Ferrelo, Coos Forest Patrol, Smith River, Crescent City, Harbor Fire and Brookings Fire & Rescue.

Read more and see additional photos at currypilot.com.

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