

KEARNEY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
MEDIA RELEASE

Date of Fire 22 March 2025 Alarm Time 13:50 Under Control _____
Location of Fire 13775 Dove Hill Road Type of Emergency Grass/Structure Fire
Possible Cause Electrical Arc Number of Firefighters _____
Number Type of Trucks 27 Fire Departments
Occupant _____

Owner: _____ Address _____

Does residence have a smoke alarm(s)? Yes No Unknown Not Applicable

Was the smoke alarm(s) working? Yes No Unknown Not Applicable

If no, reason smoke alarm(s) were not working: Battery Dead Battery missing or disconnected

Hardwired detector unplugged or shut off Fire too small to activate detector Other

Details The Kearney Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) was dispatched to 13775 Dove Hill Road for the report of a fire in a tree line that was approaching a home. KVFD responded and requested mutual aid from Amherst Fire Department prior to KVFD's arrival. KVFD crews initiated a fire attack trying to protect the home that was being threatened by the fire. KVFD then requested mutual aid from multiple departments including the State Wildland Incident Response and Assistance Team (WIRAT). Due to the dry conditions of the vegetation and the 40-45 mile per hour winds, the fire spread very quickly. The direction of the wind also shifted multiple times, which complicated the fire attack. Multiple water supply locations were set up to re-service brush trucks and other fire apparatus. Resources were assigned to multiple areas of the fire to attempt extinguishment of the field fires, as well as protect structures and extinguish multiple structure fires. Approximately a dozen farmers responded with tractors and discs to assist in making fire breaks to slow the progress of the flame line. Other farmers and ag companies responded with water tankers to assist with water supply. Approximately 27 fire departments responded to assist with the extinguishment of the fire. It took several hours to bring the fire under control. The fire is estimated to have burned approximately 640 acres. Unfortunately 1 home, 1 shop, 1 barn, and 1 Kearney Fire Department brush truck was also lost in the fire. There were no civilian injuries reported. Two firefighters were seen at the ER for minor injury and illness. Both were treated and released. The State Fire Marshal was called to assist with the fire cause and origin investigation. The cause was determined to be from a secondary power line that was being rubbed by a tree branch and caused an electrical arc. The sparks from the arc then ignited the dry vegetation and spread quickly due to the high winds.

From KVFD Deputy Fire Chief, Jason Whalen: "We are so very thankful for all of the assisting fire departments, agencies, businesses, farmers, volunteers, and those who donated food and drinks for our responders. This took everyone to bring under control and we are so thankful that there were no serious injuries. We would like to send our deepest condolences to everyone impacted by this devastating fire, especially the Wietjes family who lost their home."