

## Local house fire fought in frigid conditions

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
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The temperature hovered around zero in the wee hours Friday morning when the Gothenburg Volunteer Fire Department fielded a call about a house fire.

When members arrived at 114 Ninth St. at around 12:30 a.m., they encountered heavy smoke coming from a duplex, according to fire chief Mark Ballmer.

The fire had started as a result of an overload of an electrical circuit caused by a space heater, he said.

Luckily, there were no occupants in the dwelling but there were in an adjoining apartment.

“They were already out by the time we got there,” Ballmer said.

Ballmer said the fire was in the back of the duplex and took about two hours to extinguish.

“There was smoke damage to both apartments and fire and water damage to the unoccupied duplex,” he said.

The occupants of the adjoining duplex receiving temporary housing assistance by the American Red Cross, Ballmer said.

He estimated damage to the residence, owned by Tim and Kerri Miller, at between \$2,000 to \$4,000.

Ballmer also cautioned the community about overloading electrical circuits, especially during this time of year when heating devices are used more often.

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“Make sure they are adequate for the amperage pull,” he said.