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Recent rains aid in firefighting efforts on Levan Fire; 65% contained

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Times-News Correspondent

Levan City was enjoying a happy Pioneer Day, July 24th, when at about 4 p.m., a fast moving wildfire ignited on the east side of Highway 28 and quickly endangered six homes along the north side of the blaze.

Dorothy Harvey, incident contract, introduced Incident Commander, Mark Rosenthal, Great Basin Incident Command Team 3, to those assembled at a community meeting held at the Juab High School Little Theater on Monday.

Rosenthal said that the fire quickly spread and, within 18 hours, had burned 2,425 acres.

"There was pretty impressive fire growth in that amount of time," said Randy Anderson, Operations Line Chief. "It moved about seven miles that first night."

The interagency Incident Management Team (IMT), made up of fire management professionals from various wildland agencies, will continue to manage the fire for the State Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands until the incident is resolved.

The fire is thought to be human caused.

The fire will not be abandoned, said Rosenthal. The firefighters are actively trying to build a containment line around the fire. Some of that line is being built by hand crews.

"It is just good old fashioned labor," said Anderson. "We are just trying to get a line around the points of concern."

Anderson said he had been watching two other fires and the lightning strikes several miles away when he noticed the column of smoke coming from the Levan fire and, within 90 minutes, the fire had sent up a huge cumulonimbus fire-cloud that could be seen from 60 miles away.

"The strong wind was the catalyst," said Ken Rodgers, fire incident staff member.

With heavy west winds, the fire rapidly outpaced efforts to



LEVAN FIRE • Above, fire retardant is spread above the home of Dave Shepherd south of Levan on Thursday. Below, the fire is pushed up hill by high winds, and the Dave Shepherd family and friends watch the fire progression. Shepherd, a farmer and rancher, used his equipment to create a fire break south of his home.



put it out.

Extreme fire behavior caused spot fires up to one-quarter mile ahead of the main fire front.

"In wildfire, grass is the primary carrier," said Anderson.

The fire began across the highway from Bateman's Dairy just one mile south of Levan in an area where the grass was tall and dry. The wildfire then spread to junipers and oak brush and then into timber at the higher elevations.

One problem had been that there had not been a wildfire in the area for many years, said

Rodgers, who said that, though the fire started in the grass there was a lot of litter fall.

"That is the term we use for the accumulation of dead material, such as leaves, in the understory," he said. "It was dried out and very conducive to the fire spreading."

There was concern for homes and campers in the area. Evacuations were ordered almost immediately for six homes in the area of Chicken Creek to Water Hollow. By about 9 p.m. evacuations were lifted and residents returned to their homes.



Highway 28 was also closed but was reopened by 9 p.m.

"We have homes along the foothills and that was our main concern," said Juab County Sheriff, Alden Orme, "Chicken Creek Campground was also evacuated."

Those campers were flown to safety by helicopter.

Resources from Juab County, Nephi, Mona, Sanpete County, State of Utah, US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management responded.

"The fire is currently 65 percent contained," said Rosenthal.

There are currently 586 personnel assigned to the incident. There are 20 hand crews with 20 personnel each, eight helicopters, 10 engines, two water tenders and one bulldozer.

"The estimated cost, to date, is \$2,331,728," he said. "Heavy rain and higher humidity have aided in firefighting efforts."

He said that personnel are now working to establish as much containment as possible

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Miss Juab County Scholarship Pageant set for August 4th

The Juab County Fair will host the Miss Juab County Scholarship Pageant on Monday, August 4th where the new Miss Juab County 2014 will be crowned. The pageant will be held in the Jr. High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

Eight contestants will vie for the title. They are:

Bailey Jo Nuzman, daughter of Cori Nuzman and Dell Nuzman of Nephi. Bailey will perform a piano piece entitled "Storm Etude" for her talent. Bailey plans on attending Snow College Pre-Med program in the fall and then transfer to Utah

State University to become a Large Animal Veterinarian.

Kelsey Adams, daughter of Greg and Melissa Adams of Nephi. Kelsey will perform a dance solo for her talent. She plans on attending Acaydia School of Aesthetics to become a licensed practitioner.

Bailee Taylor, daughter of Brady and Amy Taylor of Levan. Bailee will perform a dance solo for her talent. She will be attending Juab High School as a senior; her future goals are to attend Utah State University to become a Radiologist.

Jessika Kension, daughter

of Gordon and Kim Kenison of Levan. Jesskia will be performing a piano solo. She plans on attending Snow College in the fall to study Elementary Education.

Kynlee Sessions, daughter of Matt and Analee Sessions of Nephi. Kynlee will perform a lyrical dance solo for her talent. She plans on attending Snow College in the fall to pursue a degree in Radiation Therapy.

Shamri Wright, daughter of Corey and Emily Wright of Nephi. Shamri will perform a piano piece by Yiruma. She is a senior at Juab High School and

plans on attending Southern Utah University.

Megan Wood, daughter of Gary and Stephanie Wood of Levan. Megan will perform a violin solo for her talent. She is a senior at Juab High School and plans on attending Snow College and then further her education in the Health Science Field.

Makelle Wright, daughter of Maughn and Karla Wright of Nephi. Makelle will perform a piano solo as her talent. She plans to finish high school and then attend Southern Utah University to pursue a degree

in Business.

The contestants will perform their talent, model evening gowns and "Memory" spotlight, and will answer an on stage question at the pageant.

Alexis Finch, Miss Juab County 2013, and her first attendant, Hailee Garrett will crown the new royalty.

It will be a night filled with lots of talent and entertainment as we begin the 2014 Juab County Fair week. The public is invited to attend, free of charge.

The new 2014 royalty will reign over the fair week festivities, August 4 - 9th.



Kelsey Adams



Jessika Kenison



Bailey Nuzman



Kynlee Sessions



Bailee Taylor



Megan Wood



Makelle Wright



Shamri Wright

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