

News from: **City of Oakland, Mayor's Office**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 5, 2013

Firefighters successfully contain 1.5-acre fire in Oakland hills

Oakland, CA – Two fires near the 6000 block of Castle Drive were reported at about 11:40 p.m. Thursday night.

Oakland firefighters responded and issued a second alarm, drawing mutual aid from CalFIRE. About 65 firefighters total were involved in containing the fires, which were contained at about 3:40 a.m.

The fires damaged about 1.5 acres of land and destroyed a cabin at a nearby Girl Scout camp. No evacuations were ordered, no homes were damaged and no serious injuries were reported.

The cause remained under investigation Friday afternoon. Illegal fireworks had not been ruled out.

“I want to thank our brave, professional firefighters and the rapid response of mutual aid we received through CalFIRE. These crews responded quickly and kept our residents safe,” Mayor Jean Quan said. “And I want to thank our police officers, who were pushed hard as well but worked all through the night to respond to calls of illegal fireworks and shootings.”

Quan was in the area for a police ride-along when the fires were reported and both she and the officer she was with headed to the scene. Quan praised residents of the neighborhood for their fast response and the information they shared with firefighters.

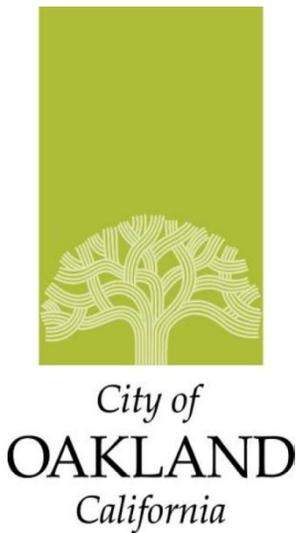
“This neighborhood has a strong, well-established CORE (Citizens Organized to Respond to Emergencies) group,” Quan said. “They helped us alert neighbors of the potential danger.”

Oakland Fire Chief Teresa Deloach Reed said that assistance was especially important because the area where the fires were made them difficult to see and difficult to locate.

Throughout areas of Oakland vulnerable to wildfires, the Wildfire Assessment District funds goat grazing that reduces vegetation to help slow the spread of fires. Thursday night's fires were slowed because the goats had grazed that area just last month Reed said.

“This was an example of exactly why these measures are important,” Reed said. “Every minute counts when you're trying to contain a fire, and the reduced vegetation likely bought us valuable time.”

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The City's police and fire departments were both prepared for a busy day. The fire department increased patrols, police crime-reduction teams and other field staff were directed toward enforcement efforts, and the City set up a hotline for the Independence Day activities for residents to call if they wanted to report illegal use for fireworks in their neighborhoods. That line received more than 200 calls and numerous 911 calls came in as well, police reported.

Officers responded to many calls reporting people discharging firearms into the air. Additionally, police responded to multiple assault shootings -- one of which was fatal -- and a protest march in Downtown Oakland also required significant police attention.

"I want everyone who called us last night to know we were out there doing all we could to keep our streets safe and livable for our residents," Assistant Police Chief Paul Figueroa said. "Thank you to everyone who called. Our partnership with the community is our most powerful tool for keeping our neighborhoods safe, and when you pick up the phone you are making a big difference."

Information about the City's fire education and prevention efforts is online at www.oaklandnet.com/fire.

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