

The Morning News

Local News for Northwest Arkansas

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Firefighters Battle Heat, Flames

By [Dan Craft](#)

THE MORNING NEWS

DURHAM — Firefighters battled heat from both flames and Mother Nature as two houses in this rural community burned Monday afternoon.

Two homes, one on Arkansas 16 across from the Durham General Store and one on Pearl Road, W.C. 1162, occupied firefighters for several hours Monday afternoon.

Nobody was at home at either residence, both of which were destroyed, said J.D. DeMotte, chief of the Elkins Volunteer Fire Department.

Neither structure was particularly large, but both fires required more firefighters than usual because of temperatures in the mid-90s, DeMotte said.

"A guy can only go so long in one of our heavy suits before they've got to cool off and rehydrate," DeMotte said. "We called in help from Goshen and Round Mountain. Without them, we would have had a lot more trouble."

Paramedics at the second fire passed out water and kept a close eye on firefighters, who rotated between fighting the fire and cooling themselves in nearby shade. Most also doused themselves under an open nozzle on one of the fire engines.

No cause has been established for either fire, although both appeared to have started in the kitchen areas of the homes, said John Jenkins, county fire marshal.

The late-afternoon call on the Arkansas 16 fire also was fortunate, DeMotte said.

"This time of day, we've got more people available," DeMotte said. "That's one of the things with volunteer departments. If this had happened at 10 a.m., a lot of our guys would have been off at work, and we'd have had to fight with a lot fewer resources."

Traffic was stopped on Arkansas 16 for more than 30 minutes, because the only nearby fire hydrant was across the road from the burning home.

"We sure don't want folks trying to drive over a 4-inch, pressurized hose," DeMotte said.