



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Passersby may have thought another devastating fire had hit Imperial Saturday night. Just three weeks earlier, firefighters were battling the Harchelroad Motors fire in downtown Imperial, but Saturday's blaze at the southeast edge of the city was only practice.

Imperial Fire Chief Bryan Dannatt said such practice burns are invaluable in their training. Saturday's practice was no different.

The home at 535 East South St., was owned by Dennis Kunnemann and AK Acres. He donated it for the practice burn.

Firemen were on the scene for several hours and firefighters practiced both interior and exterior firefighting skills.

After a light meal and the preburn meeting at the fire hall, participants went to the scene to lay out hoses. Initially, several firefighters worked on nozzle training before the blaze was started, Dannatt said.

Inside, the fire was fueled by about 30 wood pallets and hay. Once a team of firefighters knocked it down, not completely letting it extinguish, it started up again for another round of practice.

"We just let it build back up and practice again," Dannatt said.

He estimated about 18 firefighters were able to practice on the inside equipped with self-contained breathing apparatus. Two fire instructors went in with three "students," each getting about three chances to attack the fire.

Once the home was allowed to fully burn, firefighters worked on exterior firefighting technique, which included using the hose stream to control embers in the thermal column, Dannatt said.

Imperial's city tanker/pumper and a pumper from the Lamar Volunteer Fire Dept., provided the water for the practice.

Quick attack units and pumpers were stationed to the south and west for precaution.

"It was a good experience, a very good training burn," Dannatt said.

He thanked Kunnemann and AK Acres for donating the home for the practice.

Besides the Imperial and Lamar departments, Wauneta, Ogallala and Keystone/Lemoyne also sent firefighters to the training burn.



Dannatt and fellow IVFD member Jody Bopp both are certified as State Fire Instructors, and served in that role Saturday.

Others on hand for the practice burn were Joe and Missy Quinn of Oshkosh, Casey Quinn of Oshkosh, Toby Tobiasson of Hershey, Ralph, Eric and Zack Moul of Lemoyne and Bill Fortune of Ogallala.

