



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Members of the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) were called four times last week, keeping them on their toes.

Fire Chief Bryan Dannatt said the IVFD logged a lot of hours last week, starting with a cornstalk fire northwest of Imperial on Wednesday, and three more calls on Saturday.

The Nov. 3 fire, which burned cornstalks on ground owned by Dick Banks and John Keil, was the most intense of the group.

High winds out of the northwest when the call came in about 2 p.m. contributed to concern about the fire, Dannatt said, prompting IVFD officers to call in mutual aid help from fire departments in Lamar, Wauneta, Grant and Madrid.

Dannatt said the fire spread quickly due to the wind, but credited the help from the area departments in getting it under control.

He estimated the fire burned between 100 and 115 acres, which included some of the pivot corners.

The fire was started, Dannatt suspects, from work being done on an electric fence nearby.

Two of Imperial's firefighters were taken to Chase County Community Hospital for smoke inhalation. They were treated and released, Dannatt said.

The first fire Saturday came in early, shortly after 7 a.m., when the alarm sounded at Imperial Manor. Dannatt said the sprinkler set off the alarm; there was no fire.

There have been several calls to the Manor in recent weeks. Dannatt said he's visited with maintenance staff there, and the alarm company has been out to work on it.

Another call came in at 9:17 a.m. Saturday, when a natural gas meter on East 14th St. was struck by a vehicle. The driver left the scene.

Dannatt said two firefighters put on packs and approached the leaking gas meter with a full fog water spray, then shut off the meter.

Shortly after 2:30 p.m., the firemen were called again to a grass fire on the Murlena Beard rural residence, northwest of Imperial.

Chief Dannatt said she was burning trash in a barrel, and believes either the bottom or side of the barrel allowed sparks to escape, starting dry grass northeast of her home on fire.

It threatened a tree row nearby, and at least one cedar tree was lost. Firefighters were able to get it under control before more trees burned, he said.

The Lamar Volunteer Fire Department was also called in to help battle the blaze. It ended up burning about an acre of grass, Dannatt said.