

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Forty-mile-an-hour winds gusting to 62 mph made a fire in the tree pile at Imperial's south edge a bit challenging last Thursday afternoon.

City crews started to burn the tree pile 12 days earlier after Imperial received snow, and had been watching the smoldering pile last week, said Imperial Fire Chief Nick Schultz.

When last Thursday's extremely high winds came up, city staff was checking it hourly to make sure it wasn't rekindling, Schultz said.

On one of those hourly checks, city staff noticed that an area was burning among trees and other wood refuse that had been recently dropped off there, a good distance away from the area burned 12 days earlier. Supt. Pat Davison contacted the IVFD.

Hot embers were blowing into the surrounding grass within the transfer station's fenced area when the IVFD arrived, Schultz said. After about two hours, the fire was contained. City and county crews brought in front-end loaders to cover the newly-burned area with dirt, aiding the effort.

Schultz gave credit to Davison and the city crew, saying if they'd been called five minutes later, the fire likely would have jumped the fence into adjoining dry ground.

The fire chief said it didn't appear to him that last Thursday's fire started from the tree pile area that had been burned earlier.