By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Firefighters with the Imper-ial Volunteer Fire Department spent about two hours dealing with cornstalk bales on fire last Thursday morning.

The load of bales was being hauled to Imperial Beef by Becker Trucking of Sutherland, and had stopped about a quarter of a mile east off Highway 61, north of Imperial. The call came in at 11 a.m.

Fire Chief Nick Schultz said when they arrived on the scene, a front-end loader operated by an Imperial Beef employee had already pushed the bales off the trailer into a ditch and the tractor was disconnected from the trailer.

That allowed the IVFD to apply water and foam immediately to the bales as the loader continued to pull them apart. The bales finished burning as the IVFD protected the surrounding areas.

The trailer also sustained some damage. Cause of the fire was unknown.

Call to Kwik Stop

Later Thursday at 3:30 p.m., the IVFD was called again, this time to the Imperial Kwik Stop store at 4th and Broadway, where a gas leak had been reported.

It was determined, Schultz said, that as a gasoline tanker truck was refilling underground tanks there, gasoline somehow was also coming out of the vents on top of the store building and down the building's south side, where the vent pipes are.

The IVFD applied a special foam to treat those areas, as well as a vehicle parked south of the building on which gas had run.

Kwik Stop management said the issue was taken care of the next day, Schultz said.

Area very dry

Fire Chief Schultz said their fire district area remains very dry and he continues to urge caution by area residents.

Of big concern right now, he said, are hunters in the field for the firearm deer season, as well as other hunting seasons. He encouraged caution when taking vehicles into fields with any standing vegetation.

In addition, the statewide open burning ban continues to be in effect.