

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Firefighters from the Imperial volunteer department didn't get much rest during the Fourth of July holiday.

In addition to providing the manpower for the city's July 3 fireworks show as well as hosting the annual afternoon Family Fun Day on July 4, the IVFD had three calls last Wednesday and Thursday.

While the first wasn't a call by siren, Fire Chief Nick Schultz was contacted by the dispatcher at the courthouse late Wednesday night.

At about 10:40 p.m., Doug Reinke, body shop manager at Harchelroad Motors' new building on East Highway 6, went to the shop to show a visitor the new building.

Upon entering, Reinke noticed water on the floor, and believed it to be a leak somewhere, Schultz said.

After some investigation, Reinke found out it wasn't a leak at all, but a fire had started, burning up the front end of a corvette in the building, as well as a tool cart nearby. The ceiling above was also discolored, confirming a fire had been burning, which had set off the sprinkler system.

Reinke called the dispatcher, who alerted the fire chief. Schultz went to the scene and also had trucks dispatched to the location.

After an initial look, Schultz called in the Fire Marshall's Office investigator from Grant.

However, before the investigator arrived, the IVFD was called about 11:15 p.m. to a grass fire south of Enders Lake.

The trucks and personnel on the scene at Harchelroad's left for Enders Lake, and the Wauneta Volunteer Fire Department was called in to assist on mutual aid, Schultz said.

The fire south of the lake, along Crappie Bay Road, was likely started by fireworks or a cigarette, Schultz said. It burned about three acres of grass and trees. Several trees had to be cut down and drug away from the scene, he said.

Imperial took all of its rural units to Enders, and Wauneta brought two tankers and three grass-fighting rigs, Schultz said.

The IVFD had just returned to their barn from their fireworks show when the call came in about Harchelroad's.

After the fire marshal investigator's review, Schultz said cause of the Harchelroad's fire is undetermined. The building's video surveillance confirmed the fire started about 5:30 p.m. that day.

The front of the vehicle and cart were melted from the intense heat. There were no chemicals on the cart, according to Reinke, and the only electrical wiring in the area of the fire was in the car's air bag sensor.

About \$10,000 damage was sustained to the corvette and ceiling. No structural damage occurred, the fire chief said.

Fireworks cause fire July 4

Firefighters were back out on a call July 4 at 10:15 p.m. when fire started in a vacant lot north of the hospital.

The fire chief said a group of adults and kids were shooting off fireworks near the Matt and Johna Jablonski residence at 504 West 14th, and the sparks got into the dry grass near the

residence.

Less than an acre of grass burned. A row of evergreens was threatened, but firefighters extinguished the blaze before it burned into them, according to the report.

Four trucks were taken to the scene with 13 firefighters.