

Fire departments battling house fire save Christmas

Written by By Betsy Blevins, Editor and Publisher

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Dec. 22, 2011 - Early Sunday, Dec. 18, the Leonard, Bailey and Wolfe City Volunteer Fire Departments were dispatched to a structure fire on FM 816 in Bailey. After battling the blaze and watching it spread, the firefighters believed the home couldn't be saved. They entered the front of home where the Christmas tree was located and removed all of the presents for the family of seven. The house didn't burn down after all, but it isn't livable, and Christmas was saved for the Killgo family.

The home belonged to Robert Killgo, his wife, Frances, and their five girls ages fourteen to six. Robert's mother, Linda Lines, reported that the fire started in a detached garage behind the house and grew so large that it spread to the residence.

"Robert said he woke up around 4:30 a.m. after hearing a loud pop," Lines said. "He heard another pop shortly after that and decided he better get his gun and go look around. Then he saw a huge fireball coming up from the garage out back."

The garage was used to store Robert's tools - an estimated \$50,000 worth - for his flint napping business, a side business to his regular job. There were some chemicals in the building, which the family believes is the reason the fire was so big and hot. The blaze spread to the attic and back wall of the home, built in 1916.

The family got out and everybody was okay - physically - from the incident, but were there to watch as firefighters battled to save their burning home.

"They thought because the fire was in the attic that the house couldn't be saved, but they were able to stop it from spreading," Lines said. "So it didn't burn down, but it still has fire, smoke and water damage, and is unlivable. It's a shame because they had made it their home and she had it fixed up so cute."

For now, the family has moved in with Frances' parents in Nevada. But, because their children attend school at Bonham ISD and because this area is in good proximity to both their jobs, the couple wishes to move back. They had just let their homeowners insurance expire two months prior because their premiums had sky-rocketed and were no longer affordable, so they didn't

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renew with the idea that they would search for something else.

Despite the shock of dealing with such a tragedy, Lines reported that they are thankful to the firefighters for saving their gifts.

"It's unbelievable what they were able to save and do so quickly," Lines said.

Lines neighbor, Reah Easley, who recently suffered her own tragedy with the sudden death of her husband, Bill Easley, wanted to show her appreciation to the fire departments for their hard work and was out delivering candy on Monday afternoon to the three departments that showed up to help fight the blaze.

[Editor's Note: Anybody wishing to help the family either through donations or by helping them find a home can contact Linda Lines at 903-587-2622.]