

Firefighters battle blaze, weather conditions

By Mike Ellis

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PELZER — Dozens of firefighters turned to a new way of getting the water they needed to fight a Thursday afternoon fire in Anderson County.



<http://www.independent-mail.com/videos/detail/fire-on-krim-road>>Fire on Krim Road

There were no hydrants near the home, which is within sight of Interstate 85, near Exit 34 and U.S. 29.

A steep and icy hill, combined with more than a dozen cars crowding the small side street of Krim Road, made rotating tanker trucks a dangerous proposition.

The firefighters used a TurboDraft, a portable pumping device that was dropped into a nearby pond, on the home's property. The pump was hooked up to several hundred feet of thick hose that ran up the steep hill, filling the tanker trucks so firefighters could spray down the hot zones on the roof and inside the house.

The pump was able to move more water than necessary to fight the flames, hundreds of gallons of overflowing water spilled onto the front lawn.

Anderson County Fire Chief Billy Gibson said that two teens, 13 and 19, were in the house cooking fries around 2 p.m. when a grease fire erupted. The younger teen, Terran, who had been cooking, called 911 from the house before they each ran outside.

Gibson said several drivers on I-85 also called to report seeing smoke from the house.

No one was hurt in the fire.

"Teenagers here were cooking some French fries," Gibson said. "There was a kitchen fire, grease on the stove."

The fire spread out of the kitchen. Firefighters from Wren, Whitefield, West Pelzer, Powdersville, Piedmont and Three and Twenty departments responded to the blaze.

Marissa Fowler was renting the house with her family and said they were considering buying the ranch home. They were looking for immediate assistance from the Red Cross, among other agencies.

The small side road the family lived on was crowded with cars parked on both sides and several fire trucks at the bottom.

"We did have a little difficulty reaching the scene," Gibson said. "We still have some icy conditions. Stegall Road (which leads up to Krim Drive) is in very bad shape as far as snow and ice is concerned, especially where it is in the shade."

Gibson said it was the first time that county firefighters had used the TurboDraft device outside of training exercises.

"It went smoothly," he said.

Twenty-seven of the TurboDrafts were bought by the county fire department about six months ago and spread out among the county's volunteer fire departments. The units cost about \$3,000 each.

Gibson said firefighters generally do not go on the roofs during icy and snowy conditions because of the danger, so they were fighting the blaze largely from the inside.

More than 35 firefighters were at the house.

Gibson said that he has been pleasantly surprised at how few fires have happened since Monday morning's snowfall.

"We really didn't have a lot of calls in the snow; this is only the second or third structure fire," he said. "I attribute it to people being more careful and more people being at home to keep an eye on portable heaters and other things."

