



Large home burns Friday along Lithia Valley Road

by Chuck Hubbard

(Photo caption) Chuck Hubbard/staff photo-Firefighters direct a hose at the blaze which consumed this home on Lithia Valley Road early Friday afternoon. Fran Moore-Poarch and Andy Junior Poarch lost all their possessions in the fire.

A large home on Lithia Valley Road in the Moravian Falls community burned to the ground early Friday afternoon.

The log-cabin-style home of Andy Junior Poarch and Fran Moore-Poarch was burning from end to end when firefighters arrived, according to Chief Kimi Hamby of the Moravian Falls Fire Department. The couple lost all of their belongings in the fire, including a pickup truck, and Hamby estimated the loss at \$250,000.

The blaze was initially spotted and reported by Lowell Hendren, chief of the Brushy Mountain Fire Department.

Hamby said his was the first fire truck on the scene at 1:20 p.m. The blaze was through the roof when he got there.

Assisting in fighting the fire were Brushy Mountain, Wilkesboro, Broadway, Goshen, North Wilkesboro and Boomer fire departments. Firemen were on the scene until around 8 p.m.

The intense heat of the day, combined with heat and smoke from the fire, provided particular difficulty for firefighters. Wilkes Rescue Squad personnel came to the scene and provided IV fluids for several firemen suffering from heat exhaustion, along with oxygen.

Firemen drank fluids as much as possible to ward off the effects of the heat, Hamby said.

"My hat's off to them due to the weather conditions we had," he said of the firefighters. "The heat got to everybody there."

Ms. Moore-Poarch, an insurance agent from Wilkesboro, was at work when the blaze began, the fire chief said. Her husband was in Virginia.

Nick Hamby, fire investigator for the Wilkes Sheriff's Department, said the cause of the fire is undetermined, though the investigation is continuing. The initial reports are that the blaze began on the east side of the primarily wooden structure in the area where there was a spare bedroom.

There was a freezer in that area of the house and an electrical panel on the outside of the home on the east side, he noted. The area was so completely burned that it is difficult to tell if this was where the fire began.

Wilkes Fire Marshal Kevin Bounds, who also is a Moravian Falls fireman, was also on the scene.

Ms. Moore-Poarch said she and her husband are very grateful for the efforts of volunteer firefighters and other emergency personnel who came to help them.