

Fire Destroys Van, Car

A blaze that destroyed two vehicles and damaged another on 10th Street in North Wilkesboro Thursday morning is being investigated as a suspicious fire, according to Sgt. John Vandervort of the North Wilkesboro Police Department.

The street was blocked off on both ends while North Wilkesboro firefighters attacked the blaze, which occurred in a parking lot across from the Wilkes County Public Library. Smoke billowed high above the town, attracting a number of onlookers.

A 1988 Pontiac Transport minivan belonging to Shannon Dillard of Industrial Drive, Wilkesboro, caught fire and burned from end-to-end. A 2009 Pontiac sedan parked next to the van and registered to Clay Camp of Jefferson was also destroyed by the fire. Damages were listed at \$5,000 to the van and \$12,000 to the Pontiac sedan.

A 2005 Honda CRV registered to Michael Bumgarner of New Bern and also parked near the burning van received about \$500 in damage, Vandervort said.

A witness saw a man leaning into the passenger area of Ms. Dillard's van shortly before the blaze began around 11 a.m., Vandervort said. The white male, wearing blue jeans, a white T-shirt and red and white ball cap, was seen walking south down 10th Street toward Main Street.

The fire began in the front passenger area of the van, spread very quickly and soon engulfed the vehicle and the Pontiac sedan, Vandervort said.

North Wilkesboro firemen came to the scene with three fire trucks, and the fire was quickly extinguished, North Wilkesboro Fire Chief Niki Hamby said.



