

## **Fire Damages McDonald's in North Wilkesboro**

The McDonald's restaurant on Second Street, North Wilkesboro, is currently closed as a result of a fire Monday afternoon.

Firefighters were dispatched about 2 p.m. Monday after a McDonald's employee called 911 to report smoke in the dining area, said Daniel Brown, second assistant chief of the North Wilkesboro Fire Department.

Brown said firefighters found smoke coming from the area around a heat pump on the roof, directly above the dining area.

The fire appears to have started from a problem with the heat pump, said Brown, adding that employees said it began generating heat that morning with the arrival of colder weather.

"The heat pump burned up pretty badly and the fire burned down into the rafters" and also into insulation, he said. Firefighters kept the fire from burning through the ceiling, but Brown noted that there was substantial water damage in areas below the ceiling.

Firefighters reached the heat pump area with a ladder permanently attached to the rear of the building. Employees and customers exited when smoke appeared and there were no injuries.

Brown said food in the restaurant was moved to the McDonald's restaurant on U.S. 421 in Wilkesboro. The two local McDonald's restaurant buildings and franchises are owned by Patrick and Heather Joyner of Hickory, doing business as R&J Investments.

Assisting the North Wilkesboro Fire Department were the Mulberry-Fairlains, Knotville and Broadway fire departments. Firefighters were on the scene until about 6 p.m. Monday.