

November 10, 2018

FIRE – 601 S. Penn: Penn Manor Director of Safety and Code Enforcement, David Cowan reported the following this morning concerning a fire at Penn Manor:

At 11:54 p.m. Friday night Independence Fire-EMS received a fire alarm at the Penn Manor Apartment complex at 601 S. Penn. Fire Chief Shawn Wallis arrived on scene just ahead of the Ladder Truck and he encountered light smoke on first and second floors but heavy smoke on the third floor, and a working apartment fire at the south end of the building.

Shawn immediately requested a Third Alarm and mutual aid for a working structure fire in an apartment complex. Shawn made his way to the apartment and was able to shut the door on the apartment to keep the fire out of the hallway. He also encountered a resident caught in the smoke and assisted her out of the building.



The Penn Manor Apartments does not have a sprinkler system, or a standpipe, and crews had to get a hose line from the Ladder Truck up three flights of stairs to the third floor and all the way down the hall to the furthestmost South apartment. As crews were advancing hose lines they were encountering elderly residents that were trying to evacuate the smoke but were now having difficulty navigating our hose lines. The residents had their animals, walkers, and some were in wheelchairs. The Independence Police Department immediately jumped into action assisting Fire/EMS crews and assisted in evacuating the building and helping the elderly get around the hose lines; some residents had to be carried out of the building by officers.



Due to the temperature of 25 degrees, a call was made to April Nutt requesting her assistance for shelter. She immediately responded and opened up the Penn Terrace Day Room. Independence Police Officers, citizens that had responded to help, and Fire-EMS personnel began loading the elderly residents into patrol cars, vehicles and ambulances to relocate them out of the heat. Most residents were in nightgowns, slippers, some were barefoot and were extremely cold.

Independence Fire-EMS transported one patient with smoke inhalation but treated numerous others for smoke and other complaints during the call.

Fire-EMS was able to put the fire out and contain it to one apartment. There was, however water damage in the hallways and the two apartments below the fire apartment. Our Building Inspector Don Cushing was called to the scene and he worked with apartment management and Greer Electric to isolate the damaged apartments electrical and check for safety issues. Fire-EMS was able to evacuate all the smoke, and the building was declared safe to re-occupy by the Chief and Don Cushing. By 4:00 a.m., Fire-EMS had assisted in moving all the residents back to apartments and the Red Cross assisted those who could not return.

The fire is under investigation by Detective Bryant and the Independence Police Dept.

THANKS Independence Fire-EMS wishes to thank those departments that responded and assisted us: Independence Rural, Cherryvale Rural, Cherryvale Fire-EMS, and Neodesha Fire-EMS.

Also, a special thanks to our Emergency Services. Police and Fire-EMS staff did an exceptional job. They contained the fire and quickly extinguished it, but most importantly they safely evacuated and treated multiple people from the apartment complex. It was a great team effort and an exceptional job done by all.

Special thanks to Housing Director April Nutt for quickly responding and graciously opening her facility to these cold elderly residents.