

BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

Multiple Alarms Respond to Hillcrest House Fire by Nick Griswold

At 16:15 hours on the afternoon of February 28, 2011, Broome County Communications dispatched Hillcrest (55), and Port Dickinson (35) Fire Departments along with several departments for tankers to 142 Crocker Hill Road in the Town of Fenton for a reported house fire. Chief 55 responded and arrived on scene quickly with a report of smoke showing from the eaves of a single story ranch and requested the second alarm.

Squad 55 and Pumper-Tanker 35 arrived on scene shortly after Chief 55 and mounted an aggressive interior attack. The main body of fire was found in the basement and crews dug in against what would turn out to be a well developed fire. Crews quickly realized they were being pushed back by the deep seated fire and brought a second attack line into the structure.

After realizing that fire conditions were deteriorating and confirming that all residents were out of the structure, command made the decision to abandon interior operations and go defensive. Crews were also realizing that the fire was running the walls and had spread to the attic of the structure. Crews repositioned for a long defensive operation.

A tanker shuttle was also set up with Engine 35 being the supply engine at the Chenango Valley High School several miles away. On scene Engine 39-1 was used to draft from portable ponds to supply the fire attack. Later into the operation an LDH relay was also set up from a large pond a short ways down Crocker Hill Road.

Crews worked for several hours to contain the stubborn fire. Before it could be extinguished part of the first floor collapsed into the basement and eventually the roof collapsed into the attic. Crews were able to keep fire involvement out of the garage and also away from several vehicles parked out front of the structure.

During operations crews from Hillcrest, Port Dickinson, Port Crane (37), Chenango Bridge (39), Five Mile Point (59), and Chenango (66), were used for fire suppression. Choconut Center (57) responded with a FAST Team. Tankers were requested from Chenango Bridge, Port Crane, two from Chenango, Five Mile Point, Chenango Forks (44), West Colesville (51), Sanataria Springs (49), Harpursville (43), Choconut Center (57), West Windsor (54), and Whitney Point (24).

Stand by crews consisted of Squad 37 which relocated to Station 55, Prospect Terrace (63), Ouaquaga (52), Conklin (46), and East Maine (56). Several of the departments that provided tankers also had staffed engines in quarters. Also assisting on scene were Broome Ambulance, Broome County Fire Coordinators, and Broome County Fire Investigators. NYSEG was called to shut off utilities and the highway department was called for a salt truck later in the incident. Red Cross was on scene assisting the family. At the time of this article the cause of the fire is still under investigation. Most fire crews had cleared from the scene by 23:00 hours.

ALL PHOTOS BY NICK GRISWOLD



Crews work from the front door after being pulled from the structure.



Command Observes Operations from side A.



Crews work from Side C to extinguish the fire.



Crews work at windows on the B-C corner to extinguish fire in the basement.



Crews work on the A-B corner to extinguish fire in the basement.



Engine 39-1 drafts from portable ponds at the scene.



Firefighter M. Griswold works the pump of engine 35 at the tanker site.



Good friends Captain 55 G. Laskowsky (left) and former Chief 35A K. Doyle (right) await their next assignment from command.