



Rockingham
County NC

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News Release
For Immediate Release

Wentworth, NC: A bright orange and red fire woke many Rockingham County residents the morning of March 28, 2022. Emergency crews were called to the old American Tobacco Company warehouse just before 4 am when citizens and Norfolk Southern Railroad Company both reported the large vacant warehouse on fire.

Emergency Services Director Rodney Cates spoke at an afternoon press conference to inform members of the media the damage the fire caused. The mostly brick and metal building caught fire and the wood stored inside helped carry the flames across the span of the building. Along with getting safety crews to the scene, Cates contacted the National Weather Service in Blacksburg, Virginia in preparation for the strength and direction of the day's winds. Despite the heavy damage to this historic piece of Rockingham County, no injuries were reported. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Due to the incredible actions of the County's 911 Operators, Firefighters, Rescue Squads, Emergency Medical Service personal and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the fire at 125 Narrow Gauge Road was contained in a matter of hours. Rodney Cates said in part, "This fire could have been deadly if we didn't have the county-wide effort we saw today. Their service, both today and every day, should be commemorated." The crews Cates' referred to was both paid and volunteer stations across Rockingham County. Cates continued by extending the thank you to the surrounding agencies for their work as they covered calls while our emergency crews were on this scene.

As of Monday evening, County crews were still on scene motoring any remaining hot spots to ensure the safety of the area. No homes or businesses were evacuated and there are no concerns about the air quality at this point.

After his afternoon press conference, Cates continues to stress how thankful he was for the actions of all those involved in extinguishing this fire saying "it really shows the comradery between stations and crews across the county and beyond the Rockingham County boarder. I cannot thank them enough for their efforts today."

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About Rockingham County: Located above Guilford County on the Virginia border, Rockingham County covers 573 square miles and is home to more than 91,000 residents. The County Government's vision is to provide the best quality of life educationally, economically and environmentally. This is achieved by focusing on the following areas: Economic Development, Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness, Public Safety, Citizen Engagement and Communication, County Appearance and Environmental Enhancement, Quality of Life and Education. For more information, visit our website at

rockinghamcountync.gov