

Tire recycling business goes up in dark smoke

“I used to work there.”

A dejected employee of J&R Tire Recycling on Route 9 made that comment early Wednesday as fire demolished the business, located in the former FMC Building.

Hoopeston Fire Department and 11 other departments, responded to the fire, which stretched the nearly length of the building, at about 5:20 a.m. The call indicated smoke coming from the building but by the time firemen arrived just minutes later, the building was engulfed, said Fire Chief Cliff Crabtree.

“With the facility as large as it is and the fire, we went strictly defense,” he said of the strategy used to fight the fire.

Crabtree said employees indicated the fire started with a spark in the loading dock area, then spread quickly in the building, which contained car, semi and tractor tires, said Lance Smith, company general manager.

Five of the company’s 38 employees were in the building when the fire started and escaped without injury, Smith said.

As a precautionary measure, residents in the surrounding area, including about a mile to the west of the plant, were evacuated. Crabtree said Autumn Fields staff planned to evacuate their clients and that more evacuations might be necessary as winds were expected to shift.

The fire spread from the building to the entry lot where scores of tires, along with shredded tires, had been stored while a paint line was being installed.

J&R, which opened in 2011, recycled used tires into various products. The paint line was going to be used for a new product, colored rubber mulch for landscaping and playgrounds.

Smith estimated the business’ loss at \$10 million to \$15 million in machinery, plus several thousands of dollars for the paint line.

R&J owner Rodney Rogers was not at the scene this morning but Smith said he and Rogers “are trying to assess what’s going on.” With several employees who live paycheck to paycheck, “(Rogers) is trying to see what he can do,” Smith said.

If Rogers does anything, it will be in a different building as only the office area on Maple Street is intact.

“We plan on staying in business and keeping people employed,” Smith said, adding the business will try to stay

in Hoopeston.

Mutual aid came from Danville, Milford, Wellington, Bismarck, Watseka, Bluegrass, Stockland, Rossville, East Lynn and Boswell and Ambia, Ind., departments.

Assistance was also provided by local companies who hauled water to the site, including Herman Trucking, Crop Production Services, Hoopeston Foods and others.

Email:

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the Facts®**

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Louridine Florek, owner

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Hoopeston firemen man the aerial truck in an effort to beat back a fire at J&R Tire Recycling in the former FMC Building on Route 9. Firemen fought the building on multiple sides from Route 9 to Maple and were assisted by at least 11 other departments and several area businesses who helped haul water to refill tanker trucks at the scene.

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Obituaries

DISKIN - Margaret "Maggie" (Olson) Diskin, 82, of Rankin, died at 10:10 a.m. Tuesday, June 18, 2013, at home. Celebration of her life will be at 11 a.m. Friday at Grace Lutheran Church, Rankin. Burial will be in Rankin Union Cemetery. Visitation will be 4-8 pm. Thursday at Knapp Funeral Home, Rankin. Memorials are suggested to Rankin Lions Club or the church. Wolfe-Blurton Funeral Home of Hoopeston was in charge of arrangements.

METZ - Maurice O. Metz, 91, of rural Hoopeston, died at 4:23 p.m. Monday, June 17, 2013, at home. Funeral will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Hoopeston United Methodist Church, 403 E. Main. Burial with military honors will be in Floral Hill Cemetery. Visitation will be 5-7 p.m. Thursday at Brown-Alkire

Weather



Sunny today. High 83. Tonight, clear. Low 66. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 89, low 69.

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WELLINGTON: 211 N. Donovan. Thurs. 8-5, Fri. 5-8 p.m. and Sat. 8-noon. Bikes, tools, costume jewelry, antique Oil Pump Lube Dispenser, other antique items, adult clothes, LOTS of misc.

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