

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Three Die in Early Morning Springfield Fire

By Anthony Mestas, Pueblo Chieftain
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Springfield - Three people died Friday in an early morning fire that broke out at a local restaurant.

Baca County emergency officials said the blaze broke out at 2 a.m. and destroyed the business, Hometown Burritos, at 1001 Colorado St.

The names and ages of the three victims have not been released. Authorities say it may take a long period of time to identify the bodies.

The fire also destroyed an attached residence in which a family had been living.

Baca County Coroner Robert Morrow initially confirmed that two people had died in the blaze, but reported the third fatality shortly before noon Friday. He did not estimate when the victims' identities would be established.

Morrow said he was awaiting assistance before entering the scene to determine identities.

Chris Sorensen, a spokesman for Baca County, said one person, whose name has not been released, was able to escape from the blaze. Emergency crews treated and released that person at scene for possible smoke inhalation.

No firefighters were injured, however, one truck received some damage.

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation is on the scene and has not determined the cause of the fire.

Springfield fire and emergency media services were called to the scene, and later requested assistance from fire departments in Walsh, Prichett, Campo, Two Buttes, as well as Prowers



A Springfield Fire Department engine received significant damage in the fire.



Home Town Burrito restaurant fire (Special to KOAA TV, Courtesy Gloria Jean)

Rural Fire. Flight for Life from Pueblo also was requested, but did not transport anyone from the scene.

The fire was contained by 8 a.m. Fire crews remained on scene to mop up hot spots.

The Springfield Police Department and Baca County Coroner's Office also are assisting with the investigation.

An area one block north and south of the fire temporarily was evacuated, but residents have been allowed to return to their homes.

Betty Abshire, who lives one block away, said her family was awakened by a phone call from emergency officials at about 2 a.m., informing them that they were not in danger and that they probably would be smelling smoke.

"They told us not to call 911. My husband and son then went to the scene to see if they could help," Abshire said.

"We looked out the window and you could just see the smoke billowing. My husband described large flames engulfing the building and coming out the side of the front end of the eating side."

Abshire said that her son gathered several residents near the blaze to help put out embers around the area.

The building used to be Jetts Lumber and was turned into a patio Mexican restaurant a couple years ago.

"The building as it was doesn't exist anymore. The building is completely gone and there is just a chimney still standing in the middle," Sorensen said.

Springfield is located in the southeast corner of Colorado near the Kansas and Oklahoma borders, and has a population of approximately 2,500.