



PRESS RELEASE

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Submitted on behalf of the Board of Grant County Commissioners

FIRE DESTROYS BUILDING AT GRANT COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

EPHRATA – A Friday (August 7, 2009) afternoon fire destroyed a 120' x 25' building housing antique vehicles at the Grant County Historical Museum in Ephrata, which is operated by the Grant County government.

Fire units were dispatched at 3:10 pm to the museum, 742 Basin St NW, at the north end of Ephrata. The building was mostly engulfed in flames when fire units arrived. The building eventually collapsed. The loss was estimated at up to \$1-million by the county's insurance agent. The building is insured.

The building housed two antique fire engines, a 1950's public utility lineman's truck, and a few other antique vehicles. The archived museum records and photographs were not affected, as they are stored in another building on the museum campus.

Fire units from the City of Ephrata, and Grant County Fire Districts 13 (rural Ephrata), 7 (Lakeview), and 3 (Quincy) battled the blaze for nearly two hours before bringing it under control.

Firefighters kept the fire from spreading to the adjacent Washington Department of Transportation region office, which sustained heat damage, and to nearby wood-framed museum buildings, which are constructed to replicate early 1900s stores and mercantile.

One person, a museum volunteer who was inside the building when the fire started, sustained minor burns to his arm. He was treated and released from a local hospital.

The cause of the fire is under investigation by the Ephrata Fire Department. However, there is no indication of any malfeasance.

The Board of Grant County Commissioners expresses their appreciation for the local response. "The firefighters did an outstanding job protecting the other outside museum buildings," said Commission Chair Cindy Carter. "The museum staff has always done a great job of maintaining the museum, and although the building and contents were lost, we are grateful nobody was seriously injured."

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