



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Fire Department

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DATE: 08/07/2010
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Structure Fire
CASE NO.: 10005289
INCIDENT DATE :08/07/2010
INCIDENT TIME: 10:56 AM
INCIDENT LOCATION: 4530 Airpark Blvd
SUBJECT: Ameripride Linen Fire
BY: Assistant Fire Chief Richard Mattson

At 10:56 AM on Saturday, August 7, 2010 the Duluth Fire Department received an alarm for a building fire at 4530 Airpark Blvd. Upon arrival heavy smoke was seen coming from the eaves and door jambs of the Ameripride Linen and Apparel Services building. There was also loud popping and cracking noises coming from inside the structure on all sides signifying a significant fire was present. Firefighters were concerned that a backdraft or flashover could be created when they allowed air into the building during their entry.

Fire crews gained access through a smaller overhead door at the rear of the building and were confronted with heavy smoke and heat. They advanced hose lines to the far side of the building and found a large fire burning inside and around a large grouping of large laundry carts. They fought the fire but had difficulty extinguishing the fire because of the compactness of the pile of laundry. Truck companies accessed the roof and used power saws to cut through the steel roof decking in order to vent the heat and smoke from the interior. A hole was also cut in the overhead door to allow better firefighting access from the front of the building.

The high temperatures, the high humidity and the extreme heat of the fire caused firefighters to become stressed early in the fire. A second alarm was paged out for three additional companies to respond to assist with the fire. Duluth Air Guard Fire Department also sent 7 personnel to the scene to relieve Duluth firefighters for hydration and cooling breaks. One firefighter developed chest pain during the firefighting operation and was taken by Gold Cross Ambulance to the hospital for treatment. He was admitted to the hospital for treatment and is listed in stable condition.

The fire was finally extinguished and overhaul completed by 1:00 PM. Several fire apparatus remained on scene for another two hours to watch for rekindle in the burned piles that could not be taken apart due to melting materials.

The damage to the building and contents is extensive due to high heat and heavy black soot and smoke. The damage to the building is estimated at \$250,000. This damage includes heavy damage to the roof truss systems and spalling damage to the concrete wall panels in the area of the fire. The building will not be useable until repair or replacement takes place. The damage to the contents is estimated at \$250,000. This includes damage to the stored laundry and

laundry delivery equipment and also the six Ameripride delivery trucks that were inside the building at the time of the fire.

There were no civilian injuries from the fire as no workers were on scene at the time of the fire. One firefighter injury was caused by the firefighting effort.

The cause of the fire is unknown at this time. Duluth Fire Marshalls offic had investigators on scene all afternoon and will continue the investigation on Monday morning.