

THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Jacksonville Fire Department

(JACKSONVILLE, TEXAS) On Sunday June 12, 2022, the Jacksonville Fire Department (JFD) fought two fires near the intersection of El Paso St. and Austin St. Seven departments responded to the fire in addition to the JFD. The first fire at Hotel Ritual is under control at this time but has not been declared extinguished. The second fire at 706 Austin St. has been declared extinguished.

Hotel Ritual Fire Timeline

At approximately 1:06 pm, the Jacksonville Fire Department responded to a Fire Call at 540 El Paso St. in the city limits of Jacksonville. This address is known as Hotel Ritual. The housekeeper was in the house at the time of the fire and made the call to 911. The housekeeper was able to get out of the residence and nobody else was in the residence. Upon arrival, firefighters made entry into the residence on the ground level floor. The information we had was that the fire was in the basement of the multi-story Hotel. While Firefighters moved toward the basement, the fire moved between walls to the second floor. Before Firefighters were able to make it to the second floor, the fire caused the ceilings of the first floor to begin collapsing. At this point, Firefighters were instructed to exit the residence and attack the fire from the perimeter. The Jacksonville Fire Department began calling all personnel into work from all other shifts and asked for help from several other agencies. Upon receiving help from additional employees and other agencies, we were able to switch firefighters out so they could rehab and then continue working. Firefighters remained on scene until approximately 9:00 pm. The outside structure of the Hotel is mostly standing but the top two floors are mostly collapsed onto the ground level floor. The chimney and staircase remained intact in the center of the Hotel. This property is extremely dangerous at this time. We have taped this property off so that no one enters. The fire investigation is ongoing.

706 Austin St Fire Timeline

After a couple of hours of working on the fire on El Paso St., we responded to an additional house fire at 706 Austin St. This residence was approximately 100 yards northeast of the Hotel Ritual Fire. We began attacking this fire at approximately 3:25 pm with the assistance of several agencies that had come to help. This house fire was contained to the back porch and back laundry room. It was extinguished within 30 minutes and there were no injuries or anyone inside the residence at the time of the fire. The resident was watching the Hotel fire when this fire

started. We do not have any reason to believe that this fire is related to the Hotel fire. The fire is still under investigation.

Injuries

There were 2 minor injuries to Firefighters working the fire, but they have fully recovered. There was a major injury to 1 Firefighter and is still being evaluated at this time.

There were also 2 heat related injuries to bystanders that were in the crowd at the fire. UT Health EMS and Jacksonville EMS were able to assist with these citizens.

Community Support

The Jacksonville Fire Department would like to send our gratitude to the many people that assisted at both fires. We had assistance from: North Cherokee Volunteer Fire Department, Earle's Chapel Volunteer Fire Department, Reklaw Volunteer Fire Department, Gallatin Volunteer Fire Department, Rusk Fire Department, Maydelle Volunteer Fire Department, Smith County ESD, Christus Mother Francis Hospital, UT Health Hospital and UT Health EMS, The Jacksonville Police Department, Jacksonville Public Works, Whataburger, and the many citizens that continually brought food, snacks, and drinks to the scene so that everyone could stay hydrated in the 100 degree weather. It was amazing to see the support from the City, the citizens of Jacksonville, and the surrounding communities.

For additional information, please contact:

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